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IS ULSTER RIGHT?



# IS ULSTER RIGHT?

A STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION AT ISSUE BETWEEN  
ULSTER AND THE NATIONALIST PARTY, AND OF THE  
REASONS—HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, AND FINANCIAL—  
WHY ULSTER IS JUSTIFIED IN OPPOSING HOME RULE

By AN IRISHMAN

LONDON

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## PREFACE.

IN the following chapters I have endeavoured to lay before ordinary readers a simple statement of the present position of the Irish question. Following the maxim of Confucius that it is well "to study the Past if you would divine the Future," I have first shown that the tales which are told about the glories of the ancient Celtic Kingdom are foolish dreams, not supported by the accounts given by contemporary annalists or the investigations of modern writers, and that Ireland never was a nation in the political sense, with the possible exception of the few years between 1782 and 1800, during which the Irish Parliament was independent; that the charges made against the English government with reference to their action between the "Conquest" by Henry II and the assumption of the title of King by Henry VIII are baseless; and that though there is much which the historian must look back upon with regret in the period between the reign of Henry VIII and the passing of the Act of Union, it is mere waste of time now to dwell on the wrongs of a former age which have long since passed away and which in any other country would be forgotten. Then I have traced the brief history of the independent Parliament, and shown that whatever may have been its virtues or its failings, it would be impossible to revive it now; all the circumstances of the country have changed. I have

striven also to make it clear that the Nationalists of to-day are not the representatives of the leaders of that Parliament but of the party which fought against it and brought on the horrors of the Rebellion; that the Union was a political necessity, if the connection between the British Islands was to be maintained at all; and that if the people of Ireland have not derived all the benefits from the Union which they might have done, it is their own fault, as the history of Ulster during the last century has shown. Next, I have explained the rise of the present Home Rule movement, and its dependence on agrarian agitation. I have analyzed some of the provisions of the present Bill, which independent writers consider to be hopelessly unworkable; and lastly I have stated why in my opinion Home Rule in any form must be fraught with disaster not only to Ireland but also to the Empire at large.

I have no desire unnecessarily to wound the feelings of those who take a different view; if it can be shown that any of my statements are incorrect or my inference illogical, I shall be glad to correct them; but to mere abuse, such as the Nationalists are in the habit of pouring on Unionist writers, I shall pay no heed. I admit that it may be said that there are several matters which I ought to have gone into more fully; to that I can only reply that I wished to be as brief as possible, and that I have done my best to compress with fairness. What I am really anxious to do is to draw the attention of thoughtful readers, before it is too late,



to the terrible dangers with which we are faced. As an Irish historian has said :—

“ No political madness could be greater than  
“ to put the legislative machinery of an integral  
“ and essential portion of the Empire into the  
“ hands of men who are largely or mainly  
“ disaffected with that Empire, and who, in times  
“ of difficulty, danger and disaster are likely to  
“ betray it.”

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The following are the principal works of which use has been made in preparing this volume. They are cited here in order to avoid the necessity of constant footnotes :—

- “ Short History of the Irish People.” By Professor Richey.  
“ Irish Nationalism.” By the late Duke of Argyll.  
“ History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century.” By W. E. H. Lecky.  
“ History of the Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland.” By Dunbar Ingram.  
“ Ireland and Her Fairy Godmother.” By J. Warren.  
“ The Continuity of the Irish Revolutionary Movement.” By Prof. Brougham Leech.  
“ A Fool’s Paradise.” By Professor Dicey.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE ULSTER COVENANT. THE QUESTIONS STATED.

#### IRELAND UNDER THE CELTS AND THE DANES.

“BEING convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as of the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship and perilous to the unity of the Empire, We, whose names are underwritten, Men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V, humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, do hereby pledge ourselves in Solemn Covenant throughout this our time of threatened calamity to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. And, in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us, we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognise its authority. In such confidence that God will defend the right, we hereunto subscribe our names.”

Such is the Solemn Covenant which 220,000 resolute, determined Ulstermen—of various creeds and of all sections of the community, from wealthy

merchants to farm labourers—fully realizing the responsibility they were undertaking, signed on the 28th September, 1912. To represent that it was merely the idle bombast of ignorant rustics, or a passing ebullition of political passion coming from hot-headed youths excited by irresponsible demagogues, is folly. It expresses the calm resolution of earnest men who, having thought deeply over the matter had decided that it was better even to face the horrors of civil war rather than to submit to the rule of a Nationalist Government.

The opinions of the Nationalists with regard to the Ulster Covenant can be gathered from many speeches and sermons. The following extract from one of their papers—the *Frontier Sentinel*—may be taken as a specimen :—

“It may not be out of place here to translate  
“into simple English the terms of the Covenant.  
“It denies the claim of Ireland to self-govern-  
“ment and the capacity of Irishmen to govern  
“Ireland. It asserts that the Catholics of Ireland  
“are the spawn of the devil; that they are ruthless  
“savages and dangerous criminals with only one  
“object in life—the wiping out of Protestants.  
“It claims for the Protestant Unionist majority  
“of four Ulster counties a monopoly of Chris-  
“tianity, public and private morality, and clean  
“successful business enterprise. In the name of  
“God it seeks to stimulate the basest passions in  
“human nature, and calls on God to witness a  
“catalogue of falsehoods. Only a few of the

“local Protestant clergymen, it should be stated, “signed this notoriously wicked document.”

It is well then to pause and consider calmly two questions : What are the real objects of the Nationalists; and, Are the men of Ulster justified in resisting them to the uttermost?

It is a mere truism to remark that in every political question the main controversy is complicated by a number of side issues. Thus in the tangled skein of politics in South Eastern Europe there is not merely the great struggle between the Crescent and the Cross, but there are also jealousies between Greek and Bulgarian, between Servian and Austrian, which have to be considered. So in Ireland, if we take the religious question as the dominating one, we find ourselves involved in a maze of racial animosities, class prejudices, and trade disputes; by ignoring these we can arrive at a simple but unfortunately a totally erroneous solution of the question. And to weigh them all fairly involves more trouble than the average man cares to take.

Irish history is at best a dismal subject. And those who ought to be historians are too often politicians; regarding themselves as advocates and not as judges they deliberately omit incidents which tell against their views, and enlarge on others, frequently without even examining the evidence in support of them. Then in arriving at the truth about any matter connected with Ireland there is the additional difficulty arising from the custom,

almost universal amongst Irishmen, of talking in superlatives. The exaggerated expressions, both of praise and blame, which are constantly employed, at first puzzle a stranger coming to Ireland from another country; he soon, however, gets to realize that they are mere forms of speech, and are no more intended to be taken seriously than similar phrases are when used by an Oriental. They are therefore harmless. But it becomes a more serious matter when learned men employ inflated language in addressing ignorant and excitable audiences. Thus Bishop Gaughran, when recently preaching to a crowded congregation in Dublin a sermon which was reported in full in the Roman Catholic papers, said :—

“The persecution of the Catholics in Ireland  
“had no parallel in the history of the Church  
“save perhaps those of the early Christians in  
“the Catacombs of Rome. Edicts were sent  
“forth before which those of Nero might be said  
“to pale into insignificance—the Edicts of Eliza-  
“beth and Cromwell, for example.”

Yet these words came from a man who was doubtless familiar with the histories of Spain, Portugal, France and the Netherlands; and who is a leader of a party which had not long before expressed the opinion that Catholics have no reason to be ashamed of the Inquisition, which was a coercive and corporally punitive force which had effected its ends splendidly !

One of the many popular delusions under which

English people labour with regard to Ireland is that all the population of the country at the present day are Celts, and that this is the key to the whole Irish question. Thus a review of Father Tyrrell's autobiography recently appeared in an English journal in which the reviewer said : " Probably no Englishmen could have written such a book ; it needs a Latin like Rousseau, or a Celt like Tyrrell to lay bare his soul in this way." No doubt these words were written in perfectly good faith ; but if the writer had cared to make any enquiry he could have found out in a moment that the Tyrrell family were thoroughly English and that none of them had gone to Ireland before the nineteenth century. The fact is that the inhabitants of Ireland, like the inhabitants of all other countries in Western Europe, are of mixed origin. The Celts were themselves immigrants, who conquered and enslaved a pre-existing race called the Firbolgs ; then came the Scandinavian invasion ; and then wave after wave of immigration from England and Scotland, so that Sir J. Davies, writing three hundred years ago—that was, before the Cromwellian settlement and the arrival of the French refugees who had escaped from the persecution of Louis XIV—said that if the people of Ireland were numbered those descended of English race would be found more in number than the ancient natives.

This, however, is only one of many errors into which English writers have fallen. Mistakes of course will always be made ; but unfortunately it is a charge from which Mr. Gladstone's admirers



cannot clear him that when he wished to bring the English people round to the idea of Home Rule he deliberately falsified Irish history in order to make it serve his ends; and his misrepresentations have gained credence amongst careless thinkers who are content to shelter themselves under a great name without looking at what has been written in answer. The general idea of an average Englishman about Irish history seems to be that Ireland in Celtic times was a peaceful, orderly, united kingdom, famous for its piety and learning, where land was held by "tribal tenure"—that is, owned by the whole tribe who were closely related in blood—rent being unknown, and the chief being elected by the whole tribe in solemn assembly. Into this happy country came the Norman invaders, who fought against and conquered the king; drove the native owners out of their possessions, and introduced a feudal system and an alien code of law unsuited to the people; and the modern landlords are the representatives of the conquering Normans and the tenants the descendants of the ancient tribesmen who naturally and rightfully resist paying rent for the lands which by ancestral right should be their own. There could not be a more complete travesty of history.

The Celtic Church no doubt had its golden age. It produced saints and men of learning. It sent out its missionaries to the heathen beyond the seas. So famous were its schools that students came to them from distant lands. But centuries before the Normans appeared in Ireland the salt had lost its



savour. The Celtic Church had sunk into being a mere appendage of the wild tribes it had once tried to tame. The chiefs of one tribe would sack the colleges and shrines of another tribe as freely as they would sack any of their other possessions. For instance, the annals tell us that in the year 1100 the men of the south made a raid into Connaught and burned many churches; in 1113 a Munster tribe burned many churches in Meath, one of them being full of people; in 1128 the septs of Leitrim and Cavan plundered and slew the retinue of the Bishop of Armagh; in the same year the men of Tyrone raided Down and a great number of people suffered martyrdom; four years later Kildare was invaded by raiders from Wexford, the church was burnt and many men slain; and so on with dreary monotony. Bishops and abbots fought in the incessant tribal wars as keenly as laymen. Worse still, it was not infrequent for one band of clergy to make war on another. In the ninth century, Phelim, who claimed to be both Bishop and King of Leinster, ravaged Ulster and murdered its monks and clergy. In the eleventh century the annals give an account of a fierce battle between the Bishop of Armagh and the Bishop of Clonard. Nor did time work any improvement; we read of bloody conflicts between abbots and bishops as late as the middle of the fifteenth century. What influence for good could such a church have had upon the mass of the people?

And even in its noblest period the Celtic Church seems to have had but little power beyond the walls

of its own colleges. The whole history of Celtic Ireland, as we learn from the annalists, was one miserable succession of tribal wars, murders and plunderings. Of course it may be said with perfect truth that the annals of other countries at the time tell much the same story. But there is this difference between them: wild and barbarous though the wars of other countries were, they were at any rate the slow and painful working up towards a higher civilization; the country became consolidated under the most powerful chief; in time peace was enforced, agriculture improved, and towns grew up. The tribal raids of Celtic Ireland, however, were merely for plunder and destruction. From such conflicts no higher state of society could possibly be evolved. The Irish Celts built no cities, promoted no agriculture, and never coalesced so as to form even the nucleus of a united kingdom.

It was about the end of the eighth century that the first foreign influence was brought to bear on Celtic Ireland. The Danish invasion began. Heathen though the Danes were, they brought some ideas of settled government and the germs of national progress. They founded cities, such as Dublin, Waterford and Limerick. And when they, like their fellow-countrymen in England, accepted Christianity, they established bishoprics in the new towns, but took care that they should be wholly independent of the Celtic tribal episcopate; they looked to Canterbury and Rome.

Much has been written and sung about the fame of Brian Boroo. No doubt he was in some ways a

great man; and it seemed for a time that he might do for Ireland something like what Alfred the Great had done for England and Kenneth MacAlpine had done for Scotland—might consolidate the country into one kingdom. But the story of his life is a striking commentary on the wretchedness of the period. Forming an alliance with some of the Danes he succeeded in crushing the chiefs of several rival Celtic tribes; then in turn he attacked his former allies, and beat them at the battle of Clontarf in the year 1014, though they were aided by other Celtic tribes who hated Brian and his schemes even more than they hated the foreigners. Important though this battle was, its effect has been much exaggerated and misunderstood. It certainly did not bring the Danish power in Ireland to an end; Dublin was a flourishing Danish colony long afterwards—in fact it was thirty years after the battle that the Danish king of Dublin founded the Bishopric.

But Brian was slain in the moment of victory. The soldiers of his army murdered his only surviving son, and began fighting amongst themselves. Brian's dream of a united Ireland came to an end, and the country relapsed into chaos. If the immediate result of the battle was a victory of Celt over Dane, the lasting effect was a triumph of anarchy over order. It was on the Celtic people that the ruin fell; and the state of things for the next two centuries was if possible worse than it had ever been before.

It will be readily understood that throughout this

terrible period of history anything like a peaceful cultivation of the soil or a regular election to the office of chief was out of the question. It was quite an ordinary thing for a chief to obtain his position by murdering his predecessor. The annalists give us a long list of Kings of Ireland dating from before the Christian era until the arrival of the Normans. Of course the word "king" can mean little more than "prominent chief," for no one man ever had real authority over the whole of the distracted land. Even of these prominent chiefs, however, according to the annalists, very few died natural deaths. Some fell in battle, others were assassinated; but the most common fate for a monarch was to be "slain by his successor." If this was true of the most powerful men in the country, to speak of the office of chief as elective is really absurd. But more than this: there is no evidence that the "tribal system," in the sense of all the tribe being related by blood and all owning their lands in common, ever existed in Ireland even in theory. At the earliest date of which we possess any distinct information on the subject, wealth, representing physical force, had become the acknowledged basis of political power and private right; and the richer members of the community were rapidly reducing the poorer freemen—many of whom were the descendants of an earlier race or of conquered tribes—to a state of serfdom. The system (if such a word can be applied at all) was in fact a bad form of feudalism without its advantages. There was no central overlord (like those in other countries who

gradually developed into the sovereigns of mediæval kingdoms and thus became able to enforce peace and progress), each petty chief being independent; and on the other hand the dues payable by the retainers were not fixed by law or custom. We must probably reject the suggested derivation of the word "feodal" from the Celtic "Fiudir"; but if so, it is curious that two words accidentally resembling each other conveyed ideas so closely alike; for a Celtic "Fiudir" was practically a tenant at the will of the lord; and it must be admitted that the word "vassal" is of Celtic origin. Charters which date from before the Norman invasion show that the land was regarded as the private property of the chiefs; frequently the wretched occupiers, instead of paying fixed rents, were liable to unlimited exactions, one of them being the right of the lord to "coigne and livery"—that is, to quarter himself and his retainers as long as he pleased on any occupier who possessed a few cows (which were the only form of wealth in those days of universal poverty); in some cases, however, land was let for a term of years, on a fixed payment of cattle.

On the death of a freeholder his land was divided amongst his sons equally, according to what is called "the custom of gavelkind." Whether primogeniture is a good or a bad thing in England or the British Colonies at the present day is of course a totally different question; the circumstances of the times are totally different. But it can hardly be doubted by a thoughtful student of

history that the adoption of primogeniture in the early days of feudalism in other European countries was a social necessity if civilization was to rise to a higher state; and that its not being introduced in Ireland was if not a cause at least an evidence that civilization in that country did not progress. For in a condition not far removed from anarchy the connection between the ownership of land and political power is inevitable; hence if holdings are small their owners become an easy prey to stronger neighbours; whereas the possessors of larger areas can repel attacks and enable their dependents to live in some sort of security. It was the enormous number of petty independent chiefs that added to the miseries of Celtic Ireland.

I shall probably be accused of having painted too dark a picture in the brief sketch that I have given of Ireland before the coming of the Normans. I admit that it is very different from the glowing accounts of "Irish Ireland" that may be found in the pages of Nationalist journals. But the question to me is not which account is more pleasant but which is true. And I defy anyone who has cared to look through the works of such writers as Richey, Stokes, and Sullivan, to prove that what I have said is incorrect or unfair.

## CHAPTER II.

### IRELAND FROM THE TIME OF HENRY II TO THE TIME OF HENRY VIII.

IN the last chapter I dealt with the long period during which the Celtic tribes of Ireland were free from foreign influence except for the comparatively brief time when a small part of the country was under the rule of the Danes; and I endeavoured to show that according to the evidence of their own annalists and in the opinion of modern writers of various political sentiments, the whole island throughout that period remained in a chronic state of anarchy, without any advance towards a higher civilization.

As Dr. Richey, when describing the condition of Ireland about the year 1170, says, "The state of the Celtic people was beyond all hope of self-amendment. The want of law, order and justice, the absence of self-knowledge and self-control, paralysed their national action and reduced the power of their chief king to insignificance."

I come now to what has been absurdly called the conquest of Ireland under Henry II.

That the English king was instigated in his efforts by the Pope is perfectly clear. The Bull of Pope Adrian, issued in 1155, is still extant :—

"... There is indeed no doubt but that Ireland,  
"and all the islands on which Christ, the Sun of  
"Righteousness, hath shone, and which have  
"received the doctrine of the Christian faith, do



“belong to the jurisdiction of St. Peter and the  
“Holy Roman Church . . . therefore we are the  
“more solicitous to propagate the righteous  
“plantation of faith in this land, and the branch  
“acceptable to God, as we have the secret convic-  
“tion of conscience that this is more especially  
“our bounden duty. You then, our dear son in  
“Christ, have signified to us your desire to enter  
“into the island of Ireland, in order to reduce the  
“people to obedience under the laws, and to  
“extirpate the plants of vice, and that you are  
“willing to pay from each house a yearly pension  
“of one penny to St. Peter, and that you will  
“preserve the rights of the churches whole and  
“inviolate. We, therefore, do hold it good and  
“acceptable that . . . you enter this island and  
“execute therein whatever shall pertain to the  
“honour of God and welfare of the land; and that  
“the people of the land receive you honourably  
“and reverence you as their lord.”

And in 1172 Pope Alexander III ratified the action of his predecessor.

“ Forasmuch as these things which have been  
“on good reasons granted by our predecessors,  
“deserve to be confirmed . . . and considering the  
“grant of the dominion of the land by the vener-  
“able Pope Adrian, we . . . do ratify and confirm  
“the same (reserving to St. Peter and to the Holy  
“Roman Church, as well in England as in  
“Ireland the yearly pension of one penny from  
“every house) provided that, the abominations of



"the land being removed, the barbarous people,  
 "Christians only in name, may by your means,  
 "be reformed, and their lives and conversations  
 "mended, so that their disordered Church being  
 "thus reduced to regular discipline, that nation  
 "may, with the name of Christians, be so in act  
 "and deed."

Whether the description here given was literally correct, or whether the Pope's views were coloured by the fact that the Celtic Church did not acknowledge the supremacy of Rome and was heretical on certain points of doctrine, is a question outside the present subject. The Bulls are only quoted here as showing the part taken by Rome. And it must be admitted that in the succeeding century the power of the Pope became strong enough to enable him to levy taxes in Ireland for the purpose of carrying on his wars against the Emperor and the King of Aragon.

But Henry did not conquer Ireland. He did not even pretend to do so. Previous to his arrival there had been some little fighting done by a few adventurous Norman knights who had been invited by a native chief to assist him in a domestic war; but Henry II fought no battle in Ireland; he displaced no ancient national government; the Irish had no national flag, no capital city as the metropolis of the country, no common administration of the law. The English, coming in the name of the Pope, with the aid of the Irish bishops, with a superior national organization which the Irish easily recognised, were

accepted by the Irish. The king landed at Waterford; his journey to Dublin was rather a royal progress than a hostile invasion. He came as feudal sovereign to receive the homage of the Irish tribes; the chiefs flocked to his court, readily became his vassals, and undertook to hold the lands they already occupied as fiefs of the Crown. But Henry did not take the title, or assume the position of King of Ireland. He merely sought to establish a suzerainty in which he would be the over-lord. And in fact a conquest of Ireland in the modern sense of the term would have been impossible. England possessed no standing army; the feudal levies of mediæval times were difficult and expensive. It might of course have been possible to have organized a wholesale immigration and an enslavement of the natives, something like that which the Normans had accomplished in England, and the Saxons had done centuries before; but nothing of the kind was attempted. Whether Henry's original intention was simply to leave the Irish chiefs in possession or not, it is useless now to enquire. But if it was, he appears to have changed his views; for not long afterwards he granted large fiefs with palatinate jurisdiction to various Normans who had made their way over to Ireland independently.

It may be that Henry—knowing that the Conqueror, whilst taking care that no powerful seignories should grow up in the heart of his kingdom, as rivals to the throne, yet made exceptions in cases where the lands verged on hostile territory, such as Durham or Chester—thought that

he could best follow the spirit of that policy by establishing what were practically semi-independent principalities in an island already inhabited by another race. But the result was disastrous.

That the Normans were savage and brutal, dealing out no justice or mercy to their victims, is proved by the account of their conquest of England. Yet they possessed certain great qualities, which eminently fitted them to become rulers in those wild, unsettled times; as their successes, not merely in Britain, but also in Southern Italy and Syria, show. They had the idea of a strong, centralized Government; and more than that they had a marvellous capacity for receptivity. Thus we see that in England, after a period of rough tyranny, they blended the existing Anglo-Saxon Government—the strength of which lay in its local organization—with their own; and from the union of the two has come the British Constitution. So too in the Lowlands of Scotland it was the Norman knight Robert Bruce who, accepting the already existing Saxon and Roman civilization, raised Scotland into a powerful kingdom. But in Ireland all was different. The only state of society which the Normans found was Celtic barbarism. Political institutions did not exist. As the Normans in England had become Anglified, and in Scotland Scottified, so in Ireland they became Ersefied. It is true that they built stone castles which at any rate were better than the hovels of the Irish Chiefs, and (like the Danes before them) founded a few towns, such as Kilkenny, Galway and Athenry;

but there their efforts ended. Scattered amongst the tribes, they learnt their ways. They sank to the position of the Celtic Chiefs around them; local wars went on the same as before; the only difference being that they were waged sometimes by Normans against Normans or against Celts, but more frequently by one body of Celts against another, each side being aided by Norman allies.

One class of Nationalist writers has inveighed against the English kings for not having forcibly introduced English law and put an end to the barbarous Celtic customs. The simple answer is, How could they do so? Whilst England was being weakened by long continental wars or by struggles between rival Houses, what strength had she left to undertake the real conquest of Ireland? The English kings had turned to the only people who could have helped them—the Normans settled in Ireland; and they failed them. Other Nationalist writers have on the other hand declaimed with equal vehemence against the tyranny of England in forcing an alien system of law on an unwilling people. To this the answer is that nothing of the kind occurred. It is true that petitions were sent from Ireland to the King urging him to introduce English law; but these petitions came mainly from the poorer classes of English settlers who found that instead of attaining greater liberty in their new home they were being ground down to the miserable position of the native Irish. The King issued proclamations directing the English barons to permit the Irish to be governed by the law of

England; but his orders were totally disregarded; many of the unhappy English settlers fled from the country and returned to England; the barons supplied their places with native retainers. Thus the Ersefication of the degenerate Normans became complete; they “donned the saffron”—that is, they adopted the yellow dress of the Celts—abandoned their original language, and gave themselves up to a life of constant plunder and rapine.

Early in the fourteenth century the Irish septs united so far as to form a joint effort to expel the English. The incident is specially interesting, in the light of later history. Robert Bruce, a Norman knight, had recently consolidated the Scottish tribes into a kingdom and succeeded in shaking off the English yoke. The Irish Celts resolved to imitate his example. King Robert was shrewd enough to see that by aiding them he could attack his enemy at the most vulnerable point; consequently, when the chiefs offered the Crown of Ireland to his brother Edward if he would come and help them, he gladly accepted the invitation. For three years a devastating war raged over a large part of Ireland; the Scotch went from the North of Ulster almost to Limerick, burning, slaying, plundering, sacking towns, castles and churches; and a terrible famine ensued. But the Irish chiefs were no more energetic in supporting Edward Bruce than their ancestors had been in supporting Brian; he and his chief officers fell in a battle against the English near Dundalk, and the rest of his followers escaped to Scotland. The coalition fell to pieces; and the only

result of the Scotch invasion was to increase the misery of the people, especially of the unhappy English settlers, who continued to flock back to England in greater numbers than before.

As soon as the rebellion was put down, the great legislator Edward III made another effort at introducing order into the distracted land. Acts were passed by the English Parliament providing that the same law should be applicable to both English and Irish, and forbidding landowners to keep larger bands of armed men than were necessary for self-defence. But the Ersefied barons on whom he relied refused to obey the new laws; they renounced their allegiance and joined the rebellious Celtic tribes. Then the king, seeing the impossibility of carrying out his scheme for pacifying the whole of Ireland, was reduced to the expedient of dividing the country into two; leaving the larger part of it for the natives and degenerate English to misgovern as they pleased according to their own customs, and preserving only a mere fraction (the "English Pale") in allegiance to the Crown of England. This was the real meaning of the "Statutes of Kilkenny," which have been so often misrepresented by modern writers.

The next king, Richard II, attempted to imitate the policy of his ancestor Henry II. He went to Ireland with great pomp. Again the Celtic chiefs flocked to Dublin to swear allegiance to their lord; and as soon as his back was turned commenced not only fighting amongst themselves but even attacking the English Pale. The result of all his efforts



was that the limits of the Pale were still further contracted; the English power was confined to a small area in the neighbourhood of Dublin.

But even within that narrow boundary the power of the king was far from being secure. When England was torn by the Wars of the Roses, the so-called Parliament (which was really an irregular assembly at best representing a territory about the size of a modern county) seized the opportunity of declaring itself independent. It is interesting, in view of present-day questions, to observe that Dr. Richey, writing in 1869, seems to consider their action as not only justifiable but inevitable. He says :—

“The Irish Parliament declared the complete  
 “independence of the Irish Legislature, and  
 “boldly affirmed those constitutional rights  
 “which, though involved in the existence of  
 “separate parliament, had not hitherto been  
 “categorically expressed. They asserted their  
 “rights to a distinct coinage, and their absolute  
 “freedom from all laws and statutes except such  
 “as were by the Lords spiritual and temporal and  
 “Commons of Ireland freely admitted and  
 “accepted in their Parliament. They declared  
 “that no Irish subject was bound to answer any  
 “writs except those under the great seal of  
 “Ireland, and enacted heavy penalties against  
 “any officer who should attempt to put English  
 “decrees in force in Ireland. They, in fact, took  
 “the same position and laid down the same prin-  
 “ciples as the celebrated Parliament of 1782.”

Whether they imagined that they could form a separate kingdom of Dublin, or dreamt of making an alliance with the tribes outside the Pale, it is useless now to conjecture; but we can see that though they had no chance of benefiting themselves they might have caused serious injury to England. Nor was it long before a difficulty arose. The inhabitants of the Pale remained attached to the House of York even after the Battle of Bosworth, and readily accepted Lambert Simnel as King of Ireland. He was crowned in the Cathedral of Dublin, and held a Parliament. After the defeat of this Pretender, the able and astute Henry VII saw that it was necessary without further delay to make the shadowy suzerainty of England over Ireland a reality. He accordingly persuaded the Irish Parliament to pass an Act which from the name of the Lord Deputy was known as "Poyning's Act." By this Act, all English statutes then existing in England were made of force in Ireland; the chief fortresses were secured to the Crown of England; and the Irish Parliament was relegated to the position of a subordinate legislature; for it was enacted that no Parliament should be held in Ireland unless the King's Lieutenant and Council should first certify the King, under the Great Seal of Ireland, the Acts which they considered should pass; then the King and his Council should approve the proposed Acts, and issue a licence under the Great Seal of England, summoning the Parliament.

Though some writers have spoken of this as the most disgraceful Act ever passed by an independent



legislature, the people in Ireland at the time considered it a boon and a favour; for it shielded them from the unauthorized power of a Lord Deputy supported by a Parliament of his own creatures.

And so, with the close of the mediæval period, ended the second chapter of Irish history. It will be observed that there had been no religious persecution, unless indeed the conduct of the Norman—that is, the Roman—Church towards the ancient Celtic Church, or the burning of some heretics in the fourteenth century, could be so described; a view which the Nationalists of to-day will hardly care to put forward. Nor can the English Government be fairly blamed for the condition of affairs; for responsibility depends on power, and English power in Ireland hardly existed. The suzerainty of England, feeble at best, had gradually been limited to a mere fraction of the country. The Celtic tribes had long since thrown off even a nominal submission to the English Crown; the Anglo-Norman lords had become either avowedly or practically independent. But the inhabitants of Ireland did not constitute a nation or possess any common interest or bond of union. There was no trace of an organization by which the Irish tribes could be united into one people. The ceaseless civil wars had indeed supplanted the original tribesmen by the mercenary followers of another set of rival chiefs; but there had been no union; and the mass of the people, still under the influence of their native customs, were probably in a more wretched condition than they had ever been before.

## CHAPTER III.

### IRELAND UNDER THE TUDORS.

WE have seen that at the close of the Middle Ages Ireland was in the condition that some people in England now consider the panacea for all the woes of the country; it possessed a subordinate Parliament and England interfered as little as possible in its local affairs. Henry VIII attempted "to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas"; having no army of his own, he appointed the most powerful of the Norman barons his deputy. But this deputy used his authority precisely as an Ersefied Norman (who possessed no more patriotism or national feeling than a Celtic chief) might have been expected to use it,—that was, to aid him in a succession of family quarrels and tribal wars in which, allied with some of the native septs he attacked others. Even the towns outside the Pale fared little better than the remoter districts; there was actually a civil war between Cork and Limerick. The state of affairs in Celtic Ireland during the brief period from 1500 to 1534 as stated in the annals (which, however, only deal with a part of the country, hardly referring to what took place in Leinster or Munster) has been summed up by Dr. Richey in the following words:—

"Battles, plunderings, etc., exclusive of those  
"in which the English Government was engaged,

"116; Irish gentlemen of family killed in battle,  
 "102; murdered, 168—many of them with circum-  
 "stances of great atrocity; and during this period,  
 "on the other hand, there is no allusion to the  
 "enactment of any law, the judicial decision of  
 "any controversy, the founding of any town,  
 "monastery or church; and all this is recorded by  
 "the annalist without the slightest expression of  
 "regret or astonishment, as if such were the  
 "ordinary course of life in a Christian country."

At length, in 1534, matters came to a head; the Lord Deputy broke out into open rebellion. We can learn from the State papers of the period what the condition of Ireland then was. The Pale—now but the remnant of a fraction—was constantly invaded and ravished by wild tribes, and was itself becoming Ersefied; for the poorer English settlers had either fled back to England, joined the Celtic tribes in despair, as their only way of escaping from the harshness of the English lords, or been crushed out of existence; and, as had already happened elsewhere, their place had been taken by Irish retainers. Then in the rest of the country there were some ninety chiefs, of whom about sixty represented ancient septs and the remainder degenerate Normans, all claiming independence and preying sometimes on one another and sometimes on their unfortunate followers. Not infrequently also a tribe was divided against itself, and a civil war was raging between the two factions. And one result of the Ersefication of the Norman barons was

that, in addition to the regular feudal dues, they demanded every kind of Celtic tribute from the occupiers of the land. In fact, how the wretched tenants managed to support life at all seems a mystery. Whatever law there may at one time have been was now long extinct; and as King Henry himself pointed out, if the natives were to have any sort of law at all, the only possible law was the law of England.

At this time also a new factor came into the already complicated problem—the Reformation. Henry VIII never was a Protestant, in the sense of adopting the doctrines which are now usually called Protestant; but he had renounced the authority of the Pope. In 1535 Pope Paul III passed sentence upon him, consigning his kingdoms to whoever might invade them, and commanding his nobles to take up arms against him. Both the Emperor and the King of France saw their opportunity, as Robert Bruce had done centuries before. They commenced a correspondence with the Irish chiefs with the object of bringing about an invasion of Ireland. Thereupon King Henry resolved to take the only course that seemed to him possible—to make the conquest of Ireland a reality and to enforce law and order in that distracted land. His letters, which are still extant, show the care with which he thought out the matter, and his earnest desire for the welfare of the people of both races; a perusal of them would astonish those who regard him merely as a savage sensualist. Strange to say, in their Irish policy, the character of Henry VIII

shows itself at the best, and that of Elizabeth at its worst. When Henry had with difficulty succeeded in crushing the Geraldine rebellion and a series of others which broke out soon after, he got the Irish Parliament to pass an Act conferring on him the title of king; he was solemnly proclaimed as such, and his title was confirmed by the almost unanimous consent of the Irish princes.

This was important in more ways than one: it was universally recognized that the word "king" meant much more than "lord"; and it gave him a title independent of the Pope's donation.

It is one of the ironies of history that the renunciation of the Papal authority and the submission to the king's supremacy was far more rapid and general in Ireland than it was in England. For not only did all the lay chiefs readily yield their adhesion, but only two of the bishops refused to take the oath of supremacy. Rebellions such as that of Fitzgerald had no connection with religion; it was not until years afterwards when England had become identified with Protestantism and Spain with Catholicism that the Irish became intensely Papal. On the other hand, the Reformation, as a religious movement, made no headway in Ireland. It was purely negative and destructive, and emanated from the Government, not from the mass of the people. The monasteries were destroyed; hence there were no vicars to supply the parish churches, which fell into ruin; the king endeavoured rather to Anglify than to Protestantise the people by sending to them bishops and clergy from

England—but they were mere state officials, not fathers in God; unable even to speak the Irish language; what real preaching there was was done by friars sent from Rome and Madrid. Henry's efforts at establishing parish schools were also a total failure. Had there not been later immigrations from England and Scotland, Irish Protestantism would probably have died out. Yet it is but fair to state, and to bear in mind, that there was no religious persecution as such in Ireland during the Tudor period. Elizabeth's policy was, without making any actual promise of freedom of conscience, to leave the question of religious opinions alone as far as possible. The real difficulty came from the political nature of the Church of Rome; when the Pope deposed Elizabeth and gave Ireland to Philip of Spain every Irish Roman Catholic had either to be false to his religion or to become a traitor—in *esse* or in *posse*—to the queen.

When Henry had resolved to do his utmost to bring Ireland to a state of civilization, there were not wanting advisers who urged upon him that his only safe course was absolutely to destroy the whole native population by sword and famine and re-people the vacant lands by immigrants from England. Such a course would have been quite in accordance with the ideas of the time. Not thirty years previously, the combined forces of Church and State had pursued the heretic population of the Loise into the mountain fastnesses to which they had fled, and had piled logs of wood at the mouths of the caves in which they had taken refuge, and set



them on fire. Then, when all the unhappy people—men, women and children, numbering some thousands in all—had perished, their lands were distributed amongst strangers brought in from a distance to occupy them. And at a later date—in the middle of the sixteenth century—the native inhabitants of the Canary Islands were exterminated by the Spanish Inquisition, and their lands taken by the invading race. But to Henry it appeared that there was one milder course that might still be possible. Might not the native chiefs and the degenerate Normans who had shown that their only idea of independency was anarchy yet be brought together as nobles under a strong central government with a Parliament representing not merely the Pale, but all Ireland? Might not the mass of the people, whose native customs had been well nigh crushed out by civil wars, be persuaded to adopt the law of England? This was the policy deliberately adopted by Henry and acted on by him during his life. It is easy for writers living in modern times to sneer at some of the details of his scheme; but it is not so easy for them to point out what other course would have been better; or indeed, whether any other course short of a policy of extermination, would have been possible.

The remarkable thing, however, is that the change to a more severe line took place not under Henry or his Protestant son, but under the most Catholic Sovereigns Philip and Mary. It was by their orders that the first of the confiscations (which were to play so important a part in the later history

of Ireland) was carried out. By an Act passed in their reign the lands occupied by the O'Moores, O'Connors and O'Dempseys were confiscated and formed into the King's and Queen's counties, Leix and Offaly being renamed "Philipstown" and "Maryborough"; and a "Plantation" of English settlers was established.

And here it is well to pause for a moment and consider these confiscations, about which so much has been written. That confiscations have taken place in every country is a plain fact of history. There is probably no part of Western Europe where land is now held by the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants. Forcible conquest and adverse occupation is nearly always the primary root of title. But it is part of the policy of every civilized country to recognize what lawyers call "Statutes of limitations." When centuries have elapsed and new rights have grown up, it is impossible to rectify the wrongs of times long gone by. Thus we cannot suppose that any future Government of Spain would ever recognize the title of the Moors in Africa to the properties from which their ancestors were driven by Philip IV; or that the Huguenots, now scattered over various countries, could ever succeed in recovering possession of the estates in France which were confiscated at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. And the only people who have a cause to complain, even on sentimental grounds, of the wrongs of past ages, are the lineal descendants of those who suffered ill-treatment. No Englishman to-day can feel



aggrieved because Saxons drove out Britons, or Normans Saxons.

But more than that : the confiscation of the lands of rebels stands on a different basis, and has been so regarded in every country in the world, even New Zealand. The lands confiscated by Philip and Mary were owned by the arch-rebel FitzGerald. Naturally fertile and capable if properly cultivated of supporting a large population, they were at this time a wild pathless tract of forest and bog. The ceaseless tribal wars had prevented their being drained and cleared ; the miserable remnants of the Celtic tribes gained a precarious living by periodical raids on the more peaceful inhabitants of the Pale. During the whole of the reign of Edward VI fighting had gone on in Leix and Offaly with great loss of life and at enormous expense to the English Government. The object of the confiscation was not to drive out the few existing tribesmen ; for the land, when cleared and drained, might well support them as well as the new settlers. Nor was it to confer great estates on absentee proprietors, but to establish a fairly thickly settled district which might be a source of strength rather than a constant cause of trouble to the dwellers in the Pale. Nor again was it to introduce feudalism ; for as I have shown, the system already in existence was feudalism without its advantages ; the substitution of fixed dues for the barbarous custom of "coigne and livery" was an unmixed benefit to the occupiers of land. And it cannot be denied that the first "Plantation" was a thorough success—thriving

settlements and prosperous farms took the place of forest and swamp.

If the position of Henry VIII had been one of difficulty, that of Elizabeth was far more critical. The separation of the Church of England from Rome was now complete. The great powers of the Continent were united in one supreme effort to stamp out the new heresy. The massacre of St. Bartholomew had taken place in France; Philip II had ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung at Madrid, and the Pope had had a medal struck to commemorate the glorious event. The lowest computation of those put to death for heresy in the Netherlands by Charles V was 50,000; and his successor had, at the instigation of the Holy Office, issued a proclamation sentencing to death the whole population—men, women and children—with the exception of a few persons specially named. Alva boasted that he had put 18,000 Dutchmen to death on the scaffold, and the Pope presented him with a consecrated hat and sword, an honour which had previously been bestowed only on reigning sovereigns. In Spain it was regarded not only as a sacred duty but a pleasant amusement for the King and his Court to watch the torturing of heretics. England alone—then a comparatively weak and insignificant country—stood out against this overwhelming combination. And in attempting to realize the position of affairs we must remember that in the sixteenth century the Papacy was not merely a religious system but also a tremendous political power. We may now regard the claim of the Pope to depose

princes as a harmless dream ; but at that time it was a stern reality. Thus matters came to a crisis when the Pope excommunicated Elizabeth and all who remained loyal to her, released her subjects from their allegiance, offered plenary indulgence and remission of sins to all who would take up arms against her, promised a liberal supply of graces and indulgences to Irish chieftains who would rebel, and gave Ireland to Philip of Spain.

It can hardly be denied therefore that England was engaged in a life and death struggle. And unless Elizabeth would consent to the annexation of Ireland by Spain and to the conquest of England by some power that would treat the people there much as the heretics of the Netherlands were being treated by Philip, it must be admitted that any measures, however violent, became a political necessity—a mere act of self-defence. But though Elizabeth had already on hand a war with France, Spain and Scotland, her difficulties did not end there. The North of Ireland was being invaded by Celts from Scotland, and the principal chief, Shan O'Neill (who was described by the Spanish Ambassador as “ so good a Christian that he cuts off the head of any man who enters his country if he be not a Catholic ”) was in open rebellion with the avowed object of crushing out the English power, exterminating the rival tribes, and making himself King of Ulster. To so miserable a state had that part of Ireland been reduced by petty local wars between rival chiefs that hundreds of people had died of hunger. Can it be wondered that

Elizabeth conceived the idea of imitating her sister's policy and forming a "plantation" in the North?

Then came another formidable rebellion in Munster, headed by an Ersefied Norman, Desmond. These rebellions were fomented by the Pope, and in the South the rebels were aided by Spanish troops. In the amount of the aid sent from Spain, however, the Irish rebels were sadly disappointed. That has been one of the characteristic features of all Irish rebellions; the foreign powers on which they have relied have been liberal enough with promises of aid, but when the time for performance has come they have left the unfortunate Irish to their fate. (Thus in 1641 not only did the rebels fully expect that a powerful Spanish force would come to their assistance, but they even believed that 18,000 Spanish troops had actually landed at Wexford.) That these rebellions were crushed by the forces of Queen Elizabeth with a savage violence that is more suggestive of the government of the Netherlands by Spain than of what should have been the action of a Christian nation cannot be denied; but when reading the accounts of the terrible condition to which the country was reduced one cannot help thinking that the stories of outrages committed by the English troops must be exaggerated. In the first place, the writers, even when eye-witnesses, seem to have assumed that the country was peaceful and prosperous up to that time; whereas not only had the tribal wars which had gone on incessantly until a few years before reduced the people almost to a

condition of famine, but the rebels themselves, such as O'Neill and Desmond, had ravaged the country anew. And if it was obvious that the object of Elizabeth was to exterminate the whole Irish population and the Roman Catholic religion, it seems impossible (even allowing for the eccentricity of human nature in general and of the Irish character in particular) to believe that a large part of the queen's forces should have been composed of Irish Roman Catholics; or that the inhabitants of the towns, most of whom were also Irish Roman Catholics, should have taken her side; but such was undoubtedly the case. Again, if nearly the whole native population had been exterminated by slaughter and famine it would have taken at least a century to recover. Yet a few years after the commencement of the English settlement we find Spenser complaining that the new proprietors were acting as the Norman barons had done centuries before; instead of keeping out the Irish they were making them their tenants and thrusting out the English; and some of the proprietors were themselves becoming "mere Irish." Then, although no doubt a certain proportion of the Elizabethan settlers renounced their Protestantism and embraced the Roman Catholic religion, that can hardly have been the case with the mass of them; and yet before the middle of the seventeenth century we find that the great majority of the freeholders of Ireland and even of the members of the Irish Parliament were Roman Catholics; surely they must have represented the earlier population. And lastly, con-

sidering the wild exaggerations that occur in the accounts of every other event of Irish history, we cannot suppose that this period alone has escaped.

Towards the end of the queen's reign occurred the last of the native rebellions. It too was crushed; and, by the "flight of the earls"—Tyrone and Tyrconnell—was completed the work which had been commenced by Henry II. And so the third chapter of Irish history was ended.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, UNTIL THE END OF THE REIGN OF JAMES II.

THE seventeenth century is a terrible period of European history. It has been described as "the age of religious wars"; and those wars were waged with a savage ferocity which it is impossible even now to read of without a shudder.

It is a plain matter of history that from the very commencement of the Reformation the idea of toleration never entered into the heads of any of the authorities of the Church of Rome. France, Spain, Portugal, Savoy and Germany all tell the same story. Except in countries such as England where the sovereigns adopted the new opinions, the only chance which the reforming party had of being able to exercise their religion was by means of rebellion and all the horrors of civil war. What that meant, the history of the rise of the Dutch Republic tells us. As Lord Acton has said: "In the seventeenth century the murder of a heretic was not only permitted but rewarded. It was a virtuous deed to slaughter Protestant men and women until they were all exterminated. Pius V held that it was sound Catholic doctrine that any man may stab a heretic; and every man was a heretic who attacked the papal prerogatives." And it is equally true that in those cases where the reforming party succeeded in gaining the upper hand, they did not show much more mercy than had been shown to



them previously or was being shown to their co-religionists in other countries at the time. Yet it is only fair to add that when the idea of toleration did arise, it arose amongst the reformed churches. Probably the only Roman Catholic State in the world where toleration existed during the seventeenth century was the little English colony of Maryland, of which Lord Baltimore was the proprietor. And when at length the religious wars died out it was, as far as Catholic countries were concerned, because the lay mind had become thoroughly disgusted with the whole thing, and men's minds were turning in other directions—not because the clerical rulers showed the slightest desire to relax their efforts or change their policy.

It would be well if the whole dreadful period could be buried in oblivion. But it is necessary to mention the subject here, for the Nationalist party are continually referring to the horrors of the Cromwellian massacres and the penal laws; and if such matters are to be gone into at all it is only fair, in order to make a just estimate of them, to glance at the great European struggle of which they formed an incident. In the century which saw Germany deluged with blood for thirty years, and which witnessed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the revival of vehement persecution in France, it was not likely that Ireland should remain unaffected.

Soon after James I came to the throne he commenced his famous Scotch plantation in the desolated and half-emptied province of Ulster.



That it was even a greater success than the plantation formed by Philip and Mary everyone is of course aware; it is the descendants of those immigrants who, though they live in a district not so highly favoured by nature as other parts of the country, form the only really prosperous and progressive section of the community at the present day. The native Irish do not seem to have looked on the Scotchmen with much disfavour, perhaps partly because there being plenty of room for all in the desolated tract, and lands being assigned to them, they realised that they were safer in the immediate neighbourhood of a peaceful settlement than they would have been had they remained a prey to unscrupulous adventurers like Shan O'Neill.

A member of the legal profession must feel shame and sorrow in recording the fact that the chicanery of the lawyers added much to the harshness of the politicians. That, however, is only another way of saying that the humane policy of the nineteenth century was unknown in the seventeenth. Had courts been established in Ireland like the native land courts of New Zealand in which claims under customary law might be investigated, and equitable awards made, the later history of Ireland might have been very different. Yet one must remember that even in the reign of Queen Victoria there was a strong party in England and there were not a few people in New Zealand who argued that Maori customary claims should be disregarded and the treaty of Waitangi ignored. And in the seventeenth century such ideas were unheard of. Lawyers

searched for every technicality of English law by which the titles of holders of land could be upset, in favour of English claimants. Then matters became strangely complicated, as they seem to be periodically throughout Irish history. The struggle between Charles I and the Parliament began, and it soon became evident that the Parliamentary party was the stronger of the two. To the Irish the Parliamentarians meant the Puritans; and they believed, not wholly without reason, that a determined attempt would be made not only to seize all their lands but also to stamp out their religion. (It must be observed that the Elizabethan anti-Roman Acts had never been strictly carried out in Ireland, and during the reign of James I their severity had been relaxed still further—a line of conduct which had no parallel in any Roman Catholic country in Europe at the time.) Thereupon in 1641 the Roman Catholics of Ulster broke into open rebellion, and soon afterwards they applied to the kings of France and Spain for aid; and the Pope issued a bull granting a full and plenary indulgence and absolute remission for all their sins to all who would do their utmost to extirpate and totally root out those workers of iniquity who in the kingdom of Ireland had infected and were always striving to infect the mass of Catholic purity with the pestiferous leaven of their heretical contagion.

The stories told of the actual outbreak of the rebellion are interesting as an illustration of the universal habit of exaggeration about Irish affairs, to which I have already alluded. Clarendon affirms

that 40,000 English Protestants were murdered before they suspected themselves to be in any danger; Temple states that in the first two months of the rebellion 150,000 Protestants had been massacred. The Jesuit, O'Mahony, writing in 1645, says "Persevere, my countrymen, in the path you have entered on, and exterminate your heretical opponents, their adherents and helpers. Already within four or five years you have killed 150,000 of them, as you do not deny. I myself believe that even a greater number of the heretics have been cut off; would that I could say all." He had doubtless obtained his information from the returns made by the priests engaged in the rebellion to the military leaders, the figures of which were much the same. Yet Lecky (who, though in certain passages of his history he shows himself to be somewhat biassed in favour of the Irish Roman Catholic party, is on the whole a remarkably fair and impartial historian) argues with much force that there is no evidence of anything like a general massacre, and brings down the number murdered to about 8,000. Still, that there was a widespread rebellion and all the consequent horrors of civil war, there can be no doubt. The rebels of Ulster at one time tried to identify their cause with that of Charles I by producing a forged commission from the king—which annoyed the Royalists and made the Parliamentary party all the more bitter. Charles certainly did his utmost to bring about a peace—no doubt being anxious to obtain the assistance of his Irish subjects in his Scotch and English wars. But his efforts

were thwarted by the Papal Nuncio, whose instructions from Rome were that the Holy See could never by any positive Act approve of the civil allegiance of Catholic subjects to an heretical prince; and thus the Royalist cause became as completely lost in Ireland as it was in England. Before the peace was finally concluded, Charles was a prisoner in the hands of his enemies.

Then came the terrible episode of the Cromwellian war, in which Romanist and Royalist alike went down before the Puritan force. Still, though he would be a bold man who could attempt to excuse—much less to justify—the barbarities that took place, it may be doubted whether all the Cromwellian outrages put together equalled a single one of those which the Imperial troops had committed during the war which had been raging for thirty years in Germany—such for instance as the sacking of Magdeburg. It is estimated, however, that about 600,000 people (of whom 500,000 were of the Irish race and 100,000 of the English) perished by the sword, pestilence or famine in the fearful years between 1641 and 1652—in other words, about a third part of the population was wiped out. And the war was followed by a wholesale confiscation—having fought for the king being considered as much an act of treason as having rebelled against him. The confiscated lands were allotted to soldiers, to persons who had supplied money to the Parliamentary forces, and to other supporters of the new Government. It is but just, however, to add that 700,000 acres of profitable land in Con-

naught were allotted to dispossessed Romanists, and that they were allowed to occupy 100,000 acres in other parts of the country; a striking contrast to the lot of the unhappy Waldenses who were at that time being driven from their homes and slaughtered without mercy for no crime but heresy; or to the treatment a few years later by Louis XIV of his Huguenot subjects whose lands were confiscated without compensation and who were only given the choice of death or the galleys.

At the Restoration some effort was made to undo the injustice of the Cromwellian confiscations. But the matter was one of great difficulty. In many cases land had been allotted by Cromwell in payment for money received; in others the grantees had sold their holdings to purchasers who had paid in cash, regarding the original grant as indefeasible. A reconfiscation of such lands would obviously have worked a great injustice; and it is a common maxim of law that between two claimants each with a good title the one in possession is to be preferred. Still it cannot be said that the decisions of the Royal Commissioners were always equitable according to our ideas; for instance, the award of 80,000 acres to the Duke of York (afterwards James II) of land which had been forfeited under Cromwell because the owner had fought for his father, would be hard to justify on any possible grounds. Still, an Act of Settlement was passed, by which a certain amount of justice was done; it is difficult to arrive at the figures accurately, but it appears that after the passing of the Act nearly one-third of the Island

was vested in Roman Catholic proprietors. Archbishop King estimated that at the time when he was writing—1689—two-thirds of the Protestant landowners held their estates under the Act of Settlement. And Lecky says, "Only an infinitesimal portion of the soil belongs to the descendants of those who possessed it before Cromwell." But Archbishop King was influenced by the fear he had felt as to what the effect of a repeal of the Act would be; and there can hardly be a doubt that his feelings led him to overestimate the number. With regard to Lecky's remark, one can only take it as a strange instance of a gross exaggeration having crept into a book which is usually careful and accurate. It may be that the statement was not very incorrect according to the evidence the author had before him; but if so, that only proves that the evidence was wrong; for the proceedings in the Land Courts which have been set up in Ireland during the last half century have shown that the proportion of titles to estates which date from an earlier period was far larger than people had supposed.

During the peaceful and tolerant reign of Charles II the country made steady progress.

Under James II, however, everything was reversed. That unhappy monarch, having ascended the throne tranquilly, with many protestations of toleration and justice to all, succeeded in less than two years in making it clear to the people of England that his object was to confine liberty to those who professed his own creed and that his idea of good government was something like that which



was then existing in France and Savoy. Driven from Great Britain, on his arrival in Ireland he issued a proclamation declaring that his Protestant subjects, their religion, privileges and properties were his especial care; and he had previously directed the Lord Lieutenant to declare in Council that he would preserve the Act of Settlement inviolable. But the Protestants soon had reason to fear that his promises were illusory and that the liberty which might be allowed to them would be at best temporary. In a word, what the one party looked forward to with hope and the other with dread was "a confederacy with France which would make His Majesty's monarchy absolute."

In order to understand what that meant, to Irish Protestants, it is well to glance at the condition of France at the time. Louis XIV had begun by directing that the Edict of Nantes was to be interpreted by the strictest letter of the law; and soon after that the condition of the Huguenots became more unhappy than that of the Irish Roman Catholics ever was during the penal laws. The terrible "Dragonnades" commenced in 1682; soldiers were billeted on heretics, and unfortunate women were insulted past endurance; Huguenots were restricted even as to holding family prayers; children at the age of seven were encouraged to renounce their faith, and if they did so they were taken from their parents who, however, were obliged to pay for their maintenance in convent schools. Protestant churches were closed, and their endowments handed over to Roman Catholic institutions.

Huguenot children were forbidden all education except the most elementary. No heretic was allowed to sue a Catholic for debt. All this, however, did not satisfy the monarch or his ecclesiastical advisers. On the 18th of October 1685, he issued his famous Revocation of the Edict of Nantes :—

“ We by the present Edict which is perpetual  
“and irrevocable, revoke the Edict given at  
“Nantes in 1583 together with every concession  
“to the Protestants of whatever nature they be.  
“We will that all temples of that religion be  
“instantly demolished. We prohibit our Pro-  
“testant subjects to assemble for worship in any  
“private house. We prohibit all our lords to  
“exercise that religion within their fiefs under  
“penalty of confiscation of property and impris-  
“onment of person. We enjoin all ministers of  
“the said faith to leave the kingdom within  
“fifteen days of the publication of this Edict,  
“under penalty of the galleys. We enjoin that  
“all children who shall be born henceforth be  
“baptized by the Catholic curates. Persons  
“awaiting the enlightening grace of God may  
“live in our kingdom unhindered on account of  
“their religion on condition that they do not  
“perform any of its exercises or assemble for  
“prayer or worship under penalty of body and  
“wealth.”

This Edict met with cordial approval from the Catholic party in France. The famous Madame de Sevigné wrote : “ I admire the king for the



means he has devised for ruining the Huguenots. The wars and massacres of former days only gave vigour to the sect; but the edict just issued, aided by the dragoons, will give them the *coup de grace*."

The Irish Protestants saw with alarm that amongst the soldiers who came from France to aid King James were some who had taken an active part in the dragonnades organized by Louis XIV in order to carry out his edict. Then one Act was passed by the Dublin Parliament repealing the Act of Settlement; and by another 2,461 persons were declared guilty of high treason unless they appeared before the Dublin authorities on a certain day and proved they were not guilty. What steps King James was prepared to take in order to subdue the rebels of Derry who held out against him can be gathered from the proclamation which he directed Conrade de Rosen, his Mareschal General, to issue. He warned the rebels that if they did not surrender immediately, all the members of their faction, whether protected or not, in the whole neighbourhood, would be brought close to the walls of the city and there starved to death; that he would ravish the countryside, and see that no man, woman or child escaped; and that if the city still held out he would give no quarter and spare neither age nor sex, in case it was taken by force.

Even if there had been no Derry to relieve and no Protestants in other parts of the country, the conquest of Ireland was a political necessity to King William. England was at this time in much the same position that it had been in the days of

Elizabeth, substituting the name France for Spain. The continental powers were again united in a supreme effort to stamp out Protestantism, and England once more stood almost alone. In Spain and Portugal, heresy was of course still punishable with death; the Pope had celebrated the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes with a triumphal *Te Deum*; a terrible persecution was raging not only throughout the Protestant districts of France but also on the Rhine, in Hungary, Savoy and the Alpine Valleys; if Ireland had remained a separate kingdom ruled by the ally and admirer of Louis XIV, the next step would certainly have been an invasion of England by the joint forces of France and Ireland. All that we in modern times include in the term "religious liberty" hung on the issue of the battle that was fought and won on the banks of the Boyne.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PERIOD OF THE PENAL LAWS.

THE flight of James II brings us to the era of the "penal laws." To one who lives in the twentieth century and is imbued with the spirit of modern thought, the whole subject is more than painful—it is detestable. But to pass it over in silence is impossible; and in order to get a clear view of the position it is necessary to examine what the penal laws were, what they were not, and what were the circumstances of the time during which they were in force.

The penal laws were a series of enactments carefully planned so as to harass the Roman Catholics at every moment of their lives, in the hope of inducing them to abandon their religion. The unhappy people were prohibited from becoming or voting for members of Parliament; they were excluded from corporations, the army, the navy and the legal profession. They were forbidden to bear arms, or even to possess a horse worth more than £5. Education was denied to them, as they could not send their sons to the university and were forbidden either to have schools of their own in Ireland or to send their children abroad. They were not allowed to possess freehold estates in land, and even as to leaseholds they were seriously restricted. On the death of a Roman Catholic his estate was divided amongst his children equally,

unless the eldest son became a Protestant, in which case he inherited the whole. And as no Roman Catholic was allowed to act as a guardian, a man never knew that if he should die his children might not be brought up in a faith that he detested. The performance of Roman Catholic worship was barely tolerated, as no bishops or other dignitaries were allowed to remain in Ireland, and the only priests authorized to say mass were those who were "registered" and had taken the oath of abjuration—that is, an oath declaring that the Pretender had no right to the throne.

Such in brief were those terrible statutes. But without attempting to excuse them, there are various matters which must be taken into account if we are to judge them fairly. In the first place, the political aspect of the question should not be forgotten. The Protestant minority might justly fear that if the Roman Catholic party were as powerful as their numbers would naturally cause them to be, they would aid in bringing about a French invasion for the restoration of the Stuarts and the re-establishment of the system which had been in evidence under James II. An army was actually formed in France, and on more than one occasion was in readiness to start. The Stuarts were regarded by the Pope as the rightful sovereigns. The Roman Catholic prelates whose entry into Ireland was forbidden were appointed by the Pretender and were his political agents; it was that fact, and no doctrinal reason, that caused their expulsion. It is necessary to make this quite clear, as there has

been as much exaggeration on this point as on most other subjects connected with Irish history. The words of the "oath of abjuration" were as follows :

"I do solemnly and sincerely declare that I do  
"believe in my conscience that the person pre-  
"tended to be Prince of Wales during the life  
"of the late King James and since his decease  
"taking upon himself the style and title of King  
"of England by the name of James III hath  
"not any right or title whatever to the crown of  
"this realm."

A modern Roman Catholic writer has thus described the oath :—

"By the Oath of Abjuration the priest was  
"ordered to swear that the sacrifice of the mass  
"and the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the  
"saints were damnable and idolatrous. In other  
"words, the priest was ordered to apostatize, or  
"fly for his life."

And even if Roman Catholics took the oath of allegiance, the old difficulty arose as to the papal right to depose princes and to order their subjects to rebel. So late as 1768, when a declaration was drawn up which it was hoped the leaders of the Roman Catholic party would sign, so that the penal laws might be finally done away with, the Papal Nuncio vetoed the proposal because the declaration contained a reprobation of the doctrines that faith need not be kept with heretics and that if the Pope banned a sovereign his subjects might depose and

slay him. It is but fair to add, however, that a large number of Roman Catholics did sign the declaration; and the penal laws (which had been relaxed from time to time when it was seen that the Irish took no part in the Stuart rebellions of 1715 and 1745) were soon afterwards practically abolished.

Then it must be borne in mind that the Irish penal laws, although to some extent modelled on the legislation of Louis XIV against the Huguenots, were absolutely insignificant compared with those which were in force at the time in every Roman Catholic country in Europe. Galling though the Irish laws were, they never went so far as to make the mere holding of heretical opinions criminal. Thus no one in Ireland was ever put to death for believing in transubstantiation; whereas in one diocese of Portugal 20,000 people were sent to the stake for denying it. As every one who has visited the Madrid picture gallery will recollect, it was still the custom in the eighteenth century for the King of Spain to preside in state at the burning of heretics; and it was not until that century was drawing to a close that it was for the first time enacted in Portugal that sentence of death for heresy when passed by the ecclesiastical court should not be carried into effect unless the order was countersigned by the king. In France, for two or three heretics to meet for worship anywhere (their churches had of course all been pulled down) was a crime punishable with death; and any Huguenot caught whilst attempting to escape from the country

was sent to the galleys—a fate worse than mere death, for it meant death by slow torture. And every child was forcibly taken from its heretic parents at the age of five, and educated in a convent.

But more than that: Roman Catholics who fled from the tyranny of the penal laws at home had no scruple, when they reached the Continent, in taking part in persecutions far more terrible than anything they had seen in Ireland. During the dragonnades in Languedoc, Louis XIV's Irish brigade joined eagerly in the butchery of old men, women and children and the burning of whole villages. The same heroes distinguished themselves by destroying everything they could find in remote Alpine valleys so that the unfortunate Waldenses might die of starvation. And the Irish troops under Lord Mountcashel aided in the burning of 1,000 villages in the Palatinate of the Rhine, in which all the inhabitants—men, women and children—were slain by the sword, burnt to death, or left to perish from hunger. These persecutions were practically brought to an end by the French Revolution and the rise of modern ideas; but the ecclesiastical authorities, though they have lost their power, have shown no sign of having changed their principles. Even in the middle of the nineteenth century King Victor Emmanuel was excommunicated by Pope Pius IX for allowing his Vaudois subjects to build a church for themselves at Turin.

Of course it may be said with perfect truth that two blacks do not make one white. Still, the constant complaints about the tyranny of the penal



laws have less force when they come from the representatives of a party who acted in the same way themselves whenever they had the opportunity.

It is indeed frequently urged as a matter of aggravation that whereas other persecutions were those of a minority by a majority, this was of a majority by a minority. To me, so far as this makes any difference at all, it tells the other way. As a matter of morality, I fail to see any difference; putting all the inhabitants of an Alpine valley to death as heretics does not seem to me one whit the less horrible because the sovereign also ruled a large Catholic population on the plains. On the other hand, the fact that the Roman Catholics in Ireland formed the majority of the population prevented the persecution from being strictly carried out. It was comparatively easy for Louis XIV to surround a heretic district with a cordon of soldiers, and then draw them closer together searching every house as they went, seizing the clergy and taking them off to the galleys; but it was impossible to track unregistered priests through the mountains and valleys of Munster. Hence the law as to the registration of priests soon became a dead letter.

There was indeed one great difference between Irish and continental persecution. On the continent it was the holiest and best men who were the keenest persecutors. (This may seem strange to modern readers; but anyone who has studied the lives of Bossuet and San Carlo Borromeo will admit that it is true.) Hence the persecution was carried out with that vigour which was necessary to make



it a success. In Spain, if a heretic under torture or the fear of it consented to recant, the Holy Office was not satisfied with a mere formal recantation; for the rest of his life the convert was watched day and night to see that there was no sign of back-sliding; and even the possession of a fragment of the New Testament was considered as sufficient evidence of a relapse to send the wretched man to the stake. Consequently, in a generation or two heresy became as extinct as Christianity did amongst the Kabyles of North Africa after the Mohammedan persecution. In Ireland, however, persecution was always against the grain with religiously-minded Protestants. Seven bishops protested against the first enactment of the Penal Laws; and during the period when they were in force, the bishops repeatedly spoke and voted in favour of each proposed mitigation of them. (With this one may contrast the action of the French bishops who on the accession of Louis XVI in 1774 presented an address to the new king urging him to increase the persecution of the Huguenots which had become somewhat slack during the later years of his predecessor. By the irony of fate the same men were a few years later pleading vainly for the mercy which they had never shown in the days of their power.) Nor was this tolerant feeling confined to the bishops. By the aid of the Protestant gentry, the laws were continually being evaded. Protestants appointed by the Court as guardians of Roman Catholic children, used to carry out the wishes of the Roman Catholic relations; Roman

Catholic proprietors frequently handed over their estates to Protestant friends as Trustees, and, though such Trusts were of course not enforceable at law, there were very few instances in which they were not faithfully performed. Many strange stories are told of the evasions of the Acts. On one occasion whilst it was still illegal for a popish recusant to own a horse of a greater value than £5, a man met a Roman Catholic gentleman who was riding a handsome horse; he held out £5 in one hand, and with the other caught hold of the bridle. The rider, naturally infuriated at this, struck the man with his whip so heavily that he fell down dead. When he was tried for murder, the judge decided that as the man had laid a hand on the bridle, the rider had reason to suppose that he intended to take it as well as the horse, which would have been an illegal act; consequently he was justified in defending himself against highway robbery; and therefore the charge must be dismissed. Again, a Roman Catholic proprietor found out that an effort was likely to be made to deprive him of his estate. He rode up to Dublin on a Saturday; on Sunday he received the Holy Communion at a Protestant Church; on Monday he executed a deed transferring his estate to a Protestant friend as Trustee; on Tuesday he was received back into the Church of Rome; and on Wednesday he rode home again, to enjoy his estate free from further molestation.

The schools which were founded in order to convert the rising generation were a strange con-

trast to the admirably conducted institutions established in France and Spain for a similar purpose. They were so disgracefully mismanaged that the pupils who had passed through them looked back on everything that had been taught them there with a lifelong disgust.

It is needless to say that laws thus carried out were a dead failure as far as winning converts was concerned. On the other hand, they became in one sense the more galling as the enforcement of them fell into the hands of a low class of informers who had no object beyond making money for themselves. Still, public feeling was so strong that by the middle of the century the laws had almost fallen into abeyance. Brook, writing in 1762, says : " Though these laws are still in force, it is long since they have been in action. They hang like a sword by a thread over the heads of these people, and Papists walk under them in security and peace ; for whoever should adventure to cut this thread would become ignominious and detestable." And in 1778 and 1782 (that is, when, as an Irish Roman Catholic writer has pointed out, there was still neither toleration nor peace for Protestant populations in any Catholic state in Europe) the Irish Protestant Parliament formally repealed nearly all the penal laws.

Probably their most lasting effect was that relating to the tenure of land. If free purchase and sale regardless of religion had been allowed throughout the eighteenth century, one may conjecture that the effect of the Cromwellian confis-

cations would long since have died away. But these laws perpetuated that peculiar state of things which has been the cause of so much unhappiness in Ireland—the landlords generally belonged to one religion, and their tenants and dependents to another.

It may be asked, As these odious laws all came to an end generations ago, what is the good of recalling the sorrows of the past which had much better be forgotten? I reply, None whatever; and very glad I should be if the whole subject were quietly dropped. But unfortunately that is just what the Roman Catholic party in Ireland will not do. One of the ways in which religious animosity is being kept alive (and I regret to say is being steadily increased) is by the teaching in the Roman Catholic schools of exaggerated accounts of the penal laws without referring to any of the mitigating circumstances. Even in the present year—1913—the Lenten pastoral of one of the bishops goes back to the same old subject. If other countries acted in a similar manner, how could the grievances of bygone centuries ever be forgotten? The Jews, cruelly treated though they were during the time of the Norman kings, do not harp on the subject in England to-day. It may be doubted whether all the religious persecutions of Europe put together were as great a disgrace to Christendom as the slave trade—in which, I am ashamed to say, England strove to obtain the pre-eminence amongst European nations and which she forced upon her colonies against their will. Yet I should regret it

deeply if that were the one passage of history selected for study in the schools and colleges for coloured pupils in the West Indies at the present day. When a man who has suffered wrong in former years broods over it instead of thinking of his present blessings and his future prospects, one may be sure that he is a man who will not succeed in life; and what is true of individuals is true also of nations.

The expression “ Protestant ascendancy,” although it never came into use during the period with which we are dealing, has so frequently since then been employed with reference to it, that it is necessary to explain its meaning. Probably no word in the English language has suffered more from being used in different senses than the word “ Protestant.” In Ireland it frequently used to be, and still sometimes is, taken as equivalent to “ Anglican ” or “ Episcopalian ”; to an Irishman of the last century it would have appeared quite natural to speak of “ Protestants and Presbyterians,” meaning thereby two distinct bodies. This is a matter of historical importance; for so far from the Presbyterian element being favoured during the period of the Penal Laws, the English Toleration Act had not been extended to Ireland; Presbyterians were by the sacramental test excluded from all municipal offices; their worship, though never in practice interfered with, remained technically illegal. Their share in “ Protestant ascendancy ” was therefore very limited.

But if the Established Church was the one favoured body, it had to pay dearly for its privileges. In truth, the state of the Irish Church at this period of its history, was deplorable. All the positions of value—bishoprics, deaneries and important parishes—were conferred on Englishmen, who never resided in their cures, but left the duties either to be performed by half-starved deputies or not at all. Many of the churches were in ruins, and the glebes had fallen into decay; a union of half-a-dozen parishes would scarcely supply a meagre salary for one incumbent. A large proportion of the tithes had been appropriated by laymen; how small a sum actually reached the clergy is shown by the fact that the first-fruits (that is, the year's income paid by incumbents on their appointment) did not amount to more than £500 a year in all. It may be that the standard of religious life was not lower in Ireland than it was in England when the spiritually-minded non-Jurors had been driven out and Hanoverian deadness was supreme; but in England there was no other Church to form a contrast. In Ireland the apathy and worldliness of the Protestant clergy stood out in bold relief against the heroic devotion of the priests and friars; and at the time when the unhappy peasants, forced to pay tithes to a Church which they detested, were ready to starve themselves to support their own clergy and to further the cause of their religion, the well-to-do Protestant graziers and farmers were straining the law so as to evade the payment of tithes, and never thought



of doing anything further to support the Church to which they were supposed to belong. (It is but fair, however, to state that this condition of things has long since passed away; the Evangelical revival breathed new life into the dry bones of Irish Protestantism.)

But it was not merely in religious matters that Ireland suffered during this melancholy period. Students of modern history whose researches usually commence with the early part of the nineteenth century, are wont to gather from text-books the idea that the policy of the manufacturing party in England has always been liberal, progressive and patriotic; whereas that of the landed interest has been retrograde and selfish. There cannot be a greater delusion. English manufacturers have been just as self-seeking and narrow-minded as other people—no more and no less; they have been quite as ready to sacrifice the interests of others when they believed them to be opposed to their own, as the much-abused landowners. At this time every nation in Europe regarded the outlying portions of the Empire as existing only for the benefit of the centre; in fact, the English development of the "Colonial System" even then was more liberal than those of Spain or Holland. The English system, if perfectly carried out, was by no means unfair. The ground idea was that the mother country voluntarily restricted herself in matters of trade for the benefit of the Colonies, and the Colonies had to do the same for the benefit of the mother country. Thus, when England refused



to admit timber from the Baltic in order to benefit the Canadian lumber trade; and placed a prohibitive duty on sugar from Cuba so as to secure the English market for Jamaica; it was but fair that the trade in other articles from Canada and Jamaica should be directed to England. To say that the whole thing was a mistake, as such restrictions really injured both parties, is no answer, as no one at that time dreamed of such a thing as free trade. The real answer is that it was impossible to keep the balance true; some slight change of circumstances might render that unfair which up to then had been perfectly equal. And as the English merchants were on the spot and commanded votes in Parliament, any injustice against them would be speedily rectified; the colonists living at a distance and having no means of making their voice heard, would be left to suffer.

In applying the colonial system to Ireland, it is true that in theory England undertook to protect her by means of the British army and navy, from foreign foes; but beyond that, the system was to Ireland all loss and no gain. Every branch of Irish industry was deliberately ruined by the English Government. By the Navigation Act of 1663, trade between Ireland and the British Colonies was forbidden; soon after, the importation of Irish beef, mutton, pork and butter into England was prohibited; then, at the request of the English woollen manufacturers, the export of woollen goods from Ireland to any country was stopped; and finally, with a refinement of cruelty, the export of linen

articles—the one industry that had hitherto been left to the unfortunate country—was restricted to the coarsest and poorest varieties, for fear of offending the Dutch.

The result of all this wretched misgovernment was not merely destitution bordering on famine, but a wholesale emigration. Whilst the Roman Catholics were leaving the country to avoid the penal laws, the most skilful and industrious of the artizan class,—the very backbone of the nation—were being driven out by the prohibition of their trades. It is said that no less than 30,000 men were thrown out of employment by the destruction of the woollen industry alone. These were nearly all Protestants; to encourage them would have done more to Protestantize the country than all the penal laws and charter schools put together; but they were ruthlessly sacrificed to the greed of the English manufacturers. Some went to the Continent, many more to New England and the other American colonies, where they prospered, and they and their sons became some of Washington's best soldiers in the War of Independence.

It was only natural that thoughtful men in Ireland should cast envious eyes on Scotland, which had recently secured the benefit of union with England, and consequently was able to develop her commerce and manufactures unhindered. But though the subject of a union was discussed, and even referred to in addresses from the Irish Parliament to Queen Anne, no active steps were taken.

Still, in considering these commercial restrictions,

as in the case of the penal laws, we must not lose sight of the fact that the state of circumstances we are dealing with has long passed away. It is necessary for a historian to refer to it, even if he finds it hard to do so in a perfectly dispassionate way; but it is waste of time and energy for the present generation to go on brooding over woes which had come to an end before their grandfathers were born. Yet that is what the Nationalists of to-day are doing. Not long ago, the Old Boys' Association of an Irish Roman Catholic College resolved, very laudably, to found an annual prize at their alma mater. The subject they selected was an essay on the treatment by England of Irish industries before the year 1800! Had it been a Scotch or a German College, the subject chosen would probably have been, The progress in scientific knowledge during the last century, or, Improvements in means of travel since 1820; and one must ask, which subject of study is likely to be most profitable to young men who have to make their way in the modern world?

It may be asked, why did the Irish Parliament do nothing to stay this national ruin? The answer is that the Irish Parliament possessed very little power. The Bill of Rights of course did not apply to Ireland; general elections were very rare, and a large number of members were paid officers of the Government; the English Parliament had a co-ordinate power of legislating for Ireland; and since Poyning's Act (as explained by the declaratory Act of George I) was still in force, no Bill could be

introduced into the Irish Parliament until it had been approved both by the Irish and the English Councils; and the Irish Parliament might then pass it or reject it but had no power to amend it.

And the use which the English Government made of the Irish Parliament was as disgraceful as their treatment of Irish industries. Miserably poor though the country was, it was burdened by the payment of pensions of a nature so scandalous that the English Parliament even of that period would not have tolerated them.

The conditions of land tenure also added to the miseries of the country. It is often said that the land belonged to wealthy English absentees, and the unfortunate occupiers, who had no security of tenure, were ground down by the payment of exorbitant rents. This is literally true; but, like most partial statements, misleading. Much of the land was owned by wealthy Englishmen—which of itself was a serious evil; but they let it in large farms at low rents on long leases, in the hope that the occupiers would execute their own improvements. Instead of that, however, their tenants sublet their holdings in smaller lots to others; and these subtenants did the same again; thus there were sometimes three or four middlemen, and the rent paid by the actual occupier to his immediate landlord was ten times the amount the nominal owner received. As the rate of wages was miserably low, and the rent of a cabin and a plot of ground scandalously high, how the wretched occupiers managed to keep body and soul together is a mystery. Much has

been written about the useless, dissipated lives of these middlemen or "squireens"; and no doubt it is to a great extent true, although, like everything else in Ireland, it has been exaggerated. Travellers have told us of some landlords who resided on their estates, did their utmost to improve them, and forbade subletting (in spite of the unpopularity caused by their doing so). And one of the remarkable features of later Irish history is that whenever there was a period of acute difficulty and danger there were always country gentlemen to be found ready to risk their lives and fortunes or to undertake the thankless and dangerous duties of county magistrates.

It is curious how close a parallel might be drawn between the way in which Norman Ireland was Ersefied and that in which Cromwellian Ireland was Catholicized. Many of those who became large landowners by the Cromwellian confiscations, having no religious prejudices (some might say, no religious or humane feelings), when the leases of their tenants fell in, put the farms up to auction regardless of the feelings of the occupiers. As the Roman Catholics were content with a simpler manner of life than the Protestants, they generally offered higher rents; the dispossessed Protestants, driven from their homes, joined their brethren in America. Then in the South, the poorer of Cromwell's settlers, in some cases, neglected by their own pastors, joined the religion of the majority; in others, intermarrying with the natives, allowed their children to be brought up in the faith

of their mothers. Hence we arrive at the curious fact that at the present day some of the most ardent Romanists and violent Nationalists, who are striving to have the Irish language enforced all over the country, and pose as the representatives of ancient Irish septs, are really the descendants of Cromwell's soldiers.

So passed the greater part of the eighteenth century; and the unhappy country seemed as far off from progress and prosperity as ever.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE EARLIER PART OF THE REIGN OF GEORGE III. THE ACQUISITION OF INDEPENDENCE BY THE IRISH PARLIAMENT.

WHEN we come to the reign of George III we have arrived at a specially interesting period of Irish history. For we are no longer dealing with a state of society that has wholly passed away; the great events that occurred towards the close of the eighteenth century are continually referred to as bearing, at least by analogy, on the questions of the present day. It is for the honest historian to examine how far that analogy is real, and how far it is delusive.

For some time after the accession of George III, the state of Ireland was almost as miserable as before. Trade and manufactures being nearly crushed out, want of employment brought the people in the towns to the brink of starvation. In the country, although the middle classes were on the whole becoming more prosperous, the condition of the labourers and cottiers was wretched in the extreme. It is not to be wondered at therefore that we now hear of the commencement of two movements which were destined later on to play so important a part in the history of Ireland—the agitation against the payment of tithes and the rise of secret societies. Few men at the present day could be found who would attempt to justify the tithe system as it prevailed in the eighteenth century. It was not merely that the starving peasantry



were forced to contribute towards the maintenance of a religion in which they did not believe, but the whole manner of levying and collecting the tithes was bad; and what made them still more annoying was the fact that the clergy never thought of performing the duties for which tithes were supposed to exist; the large majority of the rectors did not even reside in their parishes. The principal secret societies were the Oakboys and the Steelboys of the north, and the Whiteboys of the south. The northern societies soon came to an end; but the organization of the Whiteboys continued to spread, and for a time it assumed alarming proportions. Commencing as a war against tithe proctors, the enclosure of commons, and the substitution of grazing land for tillage, they went on to commit outrages of various sorts, and something like a reign of terror spread over a large tract of country. But it may safely be said that generally speaking their conduct was not nearly so violent as that of other secret societies of a later date; and the evidence of any foreign influence being at work, or of religious animosity being connected with the movement, is slight.

It is interesting to observe that, whenever there was a violent and abnormal outbreak of crime, the Irish Parliament did not hesitate to pass special laws to meet the case. Such measures as the Whiteboy Act of 1787, or the Insurrection Act and the Habeas Corpus Suppression Act of 1796, which were readily passed whilst the Irish Parliament was completely independent, are frequently referred to

by modern agitators as amongst the brutal Coercion Acts which the tyranny of England has forced on an innocent people.

The harshness of the Penal Laws was steadily being relaxed. All restrictions on worship, or the number of clergy allowed, had long since fallen into abeyance. Roman Catholic students were admitted into Trinity College, Dublin; and the authorities of the University expressed their readiness to appoint a Divinity Professor of their own faith for them if they wished it. The restrictions on property were becoming obsolete; and political restrictions were not felt so keenly since most of the Roman Catholics would have been ineligible for the franchise on the ground of their poverty even if the stumbling block of religion had been removed. And the loyal sentiments expressed by the Roman Catholics made the best of the Protestants all the more anxious to repeal the laws which they had never regarded with favour. Then amongst educated people not only in Ireland but elsewhere, religion was ceasing to be the great line of cleavage; other matters—political, social, and commercial—were occupying men's thoughts and forming new combinations.

The political state of the country was peculiar. The real government was carried on by the Lord Lieutenant and his officials; but as the hereditary revenue did not supply funds sufficient for that purpose, it was necessary to have recourse to Parliament. And the constitution of that Parliament was as extraordinary as most things in Ireland. A

session was usually held every second year, but a Parliament might last for a whole reign. The House of Commons consisted of 300 members, of whom only 64 represented counties, and most of the rest nominally sat for small boroughs, but really were appointed by certain individuals. It was at one time computed that 124 members were nominated by 53 peers, whilst 91 others were chosen by 52 commoners. A large number of the members—a third of the whole house, it is said—were in receipt of pensions, or held offices of profit under the Crown. Of course there was no such thing as party government—in fact, parties did not exist, though individuals might sometimes vote against the wish of the government. The Lord Lieutenant, however, managed to retain a majority by what would now be called flagrant and wholesale bribery. Peerages, sinecures and pensions were bestowed with a lavish hand; and every appointment, ecclesiastical or civil, was treated as a reward for political services. But history affords many instances of how assemblies constituted in what seems to be the most unsatisfactory way possible, have been remarkable for the ability and patriotism they have shown; and certainly this was the case with that unrepresentative collection of Protestant landlords, Dublin barristers, and paid officials, who composed the Irish Parliament. A “National” party arose (I shall presently explain what was the meaning attached to that word at the time) who strove to win for Ireland the laws which in England had been enacted long before and which were

regarded as the very foundations of British liberty. Statutes were passed limiting the duration of Parliament to eight years; establishing the *Habeas Corpus*; and making judges irremovable. Afterwards, most of the Penal Laws were repealed; and at the same time the disabilities of the Protestant Dissenters were abolished.

But meanwhile foreign affairs were tending to bring about changes yet more sweeping. When England went to war with both France and Spain, the condition of Ireland was well-nigh desperate. The country was almost denuded of regular troops; steps had indeed been taken for the establishment of a militia, and arms had actually been purchased; but in the hopelessly insolvent condition of the Irish Exchequer, it was impossible to do anything further. And a French invasion might arrive at any moment. At this crisis the country gentlemen came forward. They formed their tenants and dependants into regiments of volunteers, of which they took command themselves, and strained their resources to the utmost in order to bear the expense of the undertaking. And the rank and file—farmers and labourers—seemed fired by the same enthusiasm. The movement spread rapidly over the country, but it possessed more vitality in Ulster than elsewhere. It soon became evident that Ulster volunteers may form a body not to be disregarded.

The troubles of England, however, were not limited to the Continent. The American War broke out. We, who view the question impartially through the long vista of years, can see that there

was much to be said for the English claim. The mother country had been brought to the verge of bankruptcy by a long and exhausting war waged with France for the protection of the American colonies; surely it was only fair that those colonies, who had taken but a very small part in the war, should at least bear a fraction of the cost. But the cry of "No taxation without representation" was raised; the Americans rebelled; and England was placed in the humiliating position of being defeated by her own colonists. During that period Ireland remained thoroughly loyal; the efforts of Franklin and his party to enlist Ireland on their side were as complete a failure as those of the French emissaries had been shortly before. But it was inevitable that the success of the American revolution should have a strong effect on Irish affairs. Amongst the northern Presbyterians there had always been a feeling somewhat akin to Republicanism; and (as we have seen) many of their relations were fighting in Washington's army. Then in Ireland there was something much worse than taxation without representation: the English Parliament, in which Ireland had no part, claimed to legislate for Ireland and was actually at that moment keeping the country in a state of semi-starvation by imposing severe restrictions on commerce. Irish politicians read the offers of conciliation made by the English Government to the revolted colonies, in which not only was the power of taxation given up and freedom of internal legislation established, but all power of the Parliament of Great Britain over America was renounced;

and began to ask whether England could withhold from loyal Irishmen the boons which she offered to rebellious Americans. The claims were urged in Parliament and at meetings of the volunteers and other public bodies; the English Government for some time refused to grant any concession; but at length, fearing an Irish Revolution, gave way on every point. They granted, in fact, as an Irish statesman expressed it, "everything short of separation." First (in spite of the opposition of the English manufacturing classes) all restrictions on trade were swept away; then, in 1782, the Declaratory Act of George I, by virtue of which the English Parliament had claimed the right to legislate for Ireland, was repealed, and with it went the right of the English House of Lords to act as a court of final appeal for Ireland; the restrictions imposed by Poyning's Act on the legislative powers of the Irish Parliament were abolished; and the Irish Executive was made practically dependent on the Irish Parliament by the Mutiny Act, which had previously been perpetual, being limited to two years.

Thus Ireland became a nation in a sense she had never been before. The only tie to any power beyond sea was that the King of England was also King of Ireland; Ireland could legislate for itself, and enter into commercial treaties with foreign powers; but, on the other hand, it had to pay its own debts and provide its own army and navy.

As Grattan was not merely the most prominent politician of the period, but also the leader of the now triumphant "National" party, we may fairly



take the views expressed by him as representative of those of the party that followed him. A study of his speeches and letters will show how utterly different were the ideas and aims of the National party of 1782 from those of the Nationalists of to-day. In the first place, Grattan was intensely loyal; that is to say, it never occurred to him that Ireland could ever wish to be independent in the sense of not being subject to the King of England, or could seek to be united to any other power. Secondly, he was intensely aristocratic. His idea was that Government should and would always be in the hands of the propertied and educated classes; that Parliament should consist of country gentlemen and professional men from the towns, elected on a narrow franchise. (It must be remembered that the country gentlemen had recently given evidence of their patriotic zeal by the inauguration of the Volunteer movement; and the ability and eloquence of the Irish Bar at that period is proverbial). Thirdly, he regarded Protestant ascendancy as a fundamental necessity. It is true that other politicians at the time saw that they were faced with a serious difficulty: the very principles to which they had appealed and by virtue of which they had obtained their legislative independence made it illogical that three-fourths of the community should be unrepresented; whereas if votes were given to the Roman Catholic majority it was inevitable that they would soon become eligible for seats in the Legislature; and if so, the Protestant minority must be swamped, and the country ruled by a very



different class and according to very different ideas from those which prevailed in the Parliament of which Grattan was a member. And would a Roman Catholic Parliament and nation care to remain subject to a King of England whose title depended on his being a Protestant? Grattan, however, swept all such considerations aside with an easy carelessness. He believed that under the influences of perfect toleration large numbers of Roman Catholics would conform; and the remainder, quite satisfied with their position, would never dream of attacking the Church or any other existing institution. We may smile at his strange delusions as to the future; but he was probably not more incorrect than many people are to-day in their conjectures as to what the world will be like a hundred years hence; and if we try to place ourselves in Grattan's position, there is something to be said for his conjectures. At that time the influence of the Church of Rome was at its lowest; Spain had almost ceased to exist as a European power; and in France the state of religious thought was very different from what it had been in the days of Louis XIV. Irish Roman Catholic gentlemen who sent their sons to be educated in France found that they came back Voltaireans; even the young men who went to study for the priesthood in French seminaries became imbued with liberalism to an extent that would make a modern Ultramontane shudder. Then in Ireland all local power was in the hands of the landlords; the Roman Catholic bishops possessed hardly any political influence. It

would have required more keenness than a mere enthusiast like Grattan possessed to foresee that the time would come when all this would be absolutely reversed. What was there in the eighteenth century to lead him to surmise that in the twentieth the landlords would be ruined and gone, and that local government would have become vested in District Councils in which Protestants would have no power, but over which the authority of the bishops would be absolute?

So Grattan and his party entered on the new conditions of political life with airy optimism. But there were, both in England and France, shrewder and more far-seeing men than he, who realised from the first that the new state of affairs could not possibly be a lasting one, but must lead either to union or complete separation. Of course so long as all parties happened to be of the same mind, no difficulties would arise; but it was merely a question of time when some cause of friction would occur, and then the inherent weakness of the arrangement would be apparent. A moment's thought will show that for Ireland to be subject to the English King but independent of the English Parliament was a physical impossibility. The king would act on the advice of his ministers who were responsible to the English Parliament; either the Irish Parliament must obey, or a deadlock would ensue. Then, suppose that England were to become engaged in a war of which the people of Ireland disapproved, Ireland might not only refuse to make any voluntary grant in aid, but even declare her ports neutral,

withdraw her troops, and pass a vote of censure on the English Government. Again, with regard to trade; Ireland might adopt a policy of protection against England, and enter into a treaty for free trade with some foreign country which might be at the moment England's deadliest rival. The confusion that might result would be endless.

Considerations such as these presented themselves at once to the master-mind of Pitt. He pointed out that as England had relinquished her right to limit Irish trade for the benefit of English, she was in fairness relieved from the corresponding duty of protecting Ireland against foreign foes; the two countries should therefore both contribute to their joint defence in proportion to their means. He proposed that regular treaties should be drawn up between the two countries, by which Ireland should contribute a certain sum to the navy, free trade between Ireland and England should be established, and regulations made whereby the duties payable on foreign goods should be assimilated. By such measures as these he hoped to make things run smoothly for a time at least; but when his projects were rejected by the Irish Parliament, he saw more clearly than ever that sooner or later the Gordian knot would have to be cut, and that the only way of cutting it would be the Union.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENT. THE REGENCY QUESTION. THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE REBELLION.

THAT Ireland increased in prosperity rapidly towards the end of the eighteenth century, there is no doubt. Politicians will say that this prosperity came from the increased powers gained by the Parliament in 1782; economists will reply that that had little if anything to say to it; far more important causes being the abolition of trade restrictions and the relaxation of the Penal Laws, which encouraged people to employ their money in remunerative works at home instead of having to send it abroad. It may sound somewhat Hibernian to mention the rise in rents, as another cause of prosperity; yet anyone who knows Ireland will admit that it is not impossible; and it was certainly put forward gravely by writers of the period who were by no means biassed towards the landlord interest. Thus McKenna, writing in 1793, says:—

“In several parts of Ireland the rents have  
“been tripled within 40 years. This was not so  
“much the effect as the cause of national pros-  
“perity; . . . before the above-mentioned period,  
“when rent was very low and other taxes little  
“known, half the year was lavished in carousing.  
“But as soon as labour became compulsory,  
“fortunes have been raised both by the tenantry  
“and landlords, and civilization has advanced  
“materially.”

There was also another cause of prosperity, which modern economists cannot look on with much favour. It was the policy of the Irish Government to grant enormous bounties for the development of various industries, especially the growth of corn. This no doubt gave much employment, promoted the breaking up of grass lands, the subdivision of farms and the erection of mills; and so long as the price of corn was maintained, brought much prosperity to the country, and thus was indirectly one cause of the enormous increase of population, which rose from about 2,370,000 in 1750, to about 4,500,000 in 1797. But when, during the nineteenth century, prices fell, the whole structure, built on a fictitious foundation, came down with a crash.

Not long after the Irish Parliament had acquired its independence, a controversy arose which, although it had no immediate result, yet was of vast importance on account of the principle involved. The king became insane. It was necessary that there should be a Regent, and it was obvious that the Prince of Wales was the man for the post. But the British constitution contained no provision for making the appointment. After much deliberation, the English Parliament decided to pass an Act appointing the Prince Regent and defining his powers, the Royal assent being given by Commission. The two houses of the Irish Parliament, however, without waiting for the Prince to be invested with the Regency in England, voted an address to him asking him to undertake the duties of Regent, without naming any limita-

tions. As the king recovered almost immediately, the whole matter ended in nothing; but thoughtful men realized what was involved in the position which the Irish Parliament had taken up. Grattan's resolution was to the effect that in addressing the Prince to take upon himself the government of the country the Lords and Commons of Ireland were exercising an undoubted right and discharging an indispensable duty to which in the emergency they alone were competent. By the Act of Henry VIII the King of England was *ipso facto* King of Ireland. An Irish Act of William and Mary declared that the Crown of Ireland and all the powers and prerogatives belonging to it should be for ever annexed to and dependent on the Crown of England. And the Act of 1782 made the Great Seal of Great Britain necessary to the summoning of an Irish Parliament and the passing of Irish Acts. Now did the words "King" and "Crown" merely refer to the individual who had the right to wear a certain diadem, or did they include the chief executive magistrate, whoever that might be—King, Queen or Regent? It was ably contended by Lord Clare that the latter was the only possible view; for the Regent of Great Britain must hold the Great Seal; and so he alone could summon an Irish Parliament; therefore the Irish Parliament in choosing their Regent had endangered the only bond which existed between England and Ireland—the necessary and perpetual identity of the executive. If the Irish Parliament appointed one person Regent and the English Parliament another,

separation or war might be the result; and even as it was, the appointment of the Prince with limited powers in England and unlimited in Ireland, must lead to confusion. But more than that; suppose that the House of Brunswick were to die out, and another Act of Settlement were to become necessary, might not the Irish Parliament choose a different sovereign from the one chosen by England? Constitutional lawyers recollected that such a difficulty nearly arose between Scotland and England, but was settled by the Act of Union; and that it was the recognition of Lambert Simnel by the Irish Parliament that was the immediate cause of the passing of Poyning's Act; and saw what the revived powers of the Irish Parliament might lead to.

Although the Parliament had now become independent, there was still nothing like a responsible ministry as we now understand it, and the government managed to maintain its control, partly by the peculiar composition of the Parliament (to which I have already referred), and partly by the disposal of favours. And it cannot be denied that the Parliament passed much useful legislation. Two questions, however, were now coming forward on which the whole political condition of the country depended, and which were closely entwined with one another. The first was the reform of the legislature, so as to make the House of Commons a really representative body; the second was the final abolition of the Penal Laws. As to reform, the Parliament was naturally slow (did any political



assembly in the world ever divest itself of its own privileges without pressure from without?); but as to the abolition of the Penal Laws there was a cordiality which is remarkable, and which is seldom referred to by the Nationalist writers of the present day when they discourse about the Penal Laws. With regard to social matters—such as admission to Corporations, taking Degrees at the University, and holding medical professorships,—there was hardly any hesitation; the political question, however, was more difficult. In both England and Ireland at that time a forty-shilling freehold gave a vote. That was a matter of slight importance in England, as the number of small freeholders was limited, land being usually let for a term of years. In Ireland, however, the ordinary arrangement was for peasants to hold their scraps of land for life; and land having recently increased in value enormously, a large proportion of these were of the value of forty shillings. Hence, the whole constituency would be altered; thousands of new electors, all of them poor and illiterate, would be added in many constituencies; and the representation of the country would at once pass into Roman Catholic hands. To fix a higher qualification for Roman Catholics than for Protestants would be not to abolish but to perpetuate the Penal Laws; to deprive the existing voters of the franchise was out of the question; hence the franchise was granted but not without considerable hesitation on the part of the more thoughtful members. On the other hand it was urged with great force that to give these

privileges to the uneducated mass but to continue the disabilities of the Roman Catholic gentry by not allowing them to sit in Parliament was absurd. The proposal to abolish the religious test in the case of Members of Parliament was, however, defeated.

Looking back, with the light of later history to aid us, it is interesting to see how much more correct were Lord Clare's predictions of the future than Grattan's. Grattan (as I have already explained), taking his ideas from his lay friends among the cultured classes, and seeing the decline of the Papal influence on the continent, considered that anyone who regarded Popery as a political influence of the future totally misunderstood the principles which then governed human action; for controverted points of religion (such as belief in the Real Presence) had ceased to be a principle of human action. He maintained that the cause of the Pope, as a political force, was as dead as that of the Stuarts; that priestcraft was a superannuated folly; and that in Ireland a new political religion had arisen, superseding all influence of priest and parson, and burying for ever theological discord in the love of civil and religious liberty. Clare, who was not only a shrewder observer but a much more deeply read man, realized that in order to find out what would guide the Roman Catholic Church in the future one must look not at the passing opinions of laymen but at the constitution of the Church; he foresaw that if the artificial supports which maintained the Protestant ascendancy were

removed, the mere force of numbers would bring about a Roman Catholic ascendancy; and in enumerating the results of that he even said that the time would come when the Church would decide on all questions as to marriage.

In order to show how far Lord Clare's expectations have been verified, I will quote, not the words of an Orange speaker or writer, but of an eminent Roman Catholic, the Rev. J. T. McNicholas, O.P., in his recently published book on "The New Marriage Legislation" which, being issued with an *Imprimatur*, will be received by all parties as a work of authority. He says:—

"Many Protestants may think the Church  
"presumptuous in decreeing their marriages  
"valid or invalid according as they have or have  
"not complied with certain conditions. As the  
"Church cannot err, neither can she be presumptuous. She alone is judge of the extent of her  
"power. Anyone validly baptised, either in the  
"Church or among heretics, becomes thereby a  
"subject of the Roman Catholic Church."

But whilst politicians were amusing themselves with fervid but useless oratory in Parliament, stirring events were taking place elsewhere. To trace in these pages even a bare outline of the main incidents of those terrible years is impossible; and yet without doing so it is not easy to obtain a correct view of the tangled skein of Irish politics at the time. In studying any history of the period, we cannot but be struck by observing on the one hand

how completely in some respects circumstances and ideas have changed since then ; it is hard to realize that Ulster was for a time the scene of wild disorder—assassination, arson, burglary and every form of outrage—brought about mainly by a society which claimed to be, and to a certain extent was, formed by a union of the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic parties—whilst the south and west remained fairly orderly and loyal. And yet on the other hand we find many of the phenomena which have been characteristic of later periods of Irish political agitation, already flourishing. Boycotting existed in fact, though the name was not yet invented ; also nocturnal raids for arms, the sacking of lonely farmhouses, the intimidation of witnesses and the mutilation of cattle. Again, we see all through the history of Irish secret societies that their organization has been so splendid that the ordinary law has been powerless against them ; for witnesses will not give evidence and juries will not convict if they know that to do so will mean certain ruin and probable death ; and yet those same societies have always possessed one element of weakness : however terrible their oaths of secrecy have been, the Government have never had the slightest difficulty in finding out, through their confidential agents, everything that has taken place at their meetings, and what their projects are.

As early as 1785 there had been two societies carrying on something like civil war on a small scale in the north. How they originated, is a matter of dispute ; but at any rate before they had

long been in existence, the religious element became supreme—as it does sooner or later in every Irish movement; whatever temporary alliances may be formed for other reasons, religion always ultimately becomes the line of cleavage. In this case, the “Peep of Day Boys” were Protestants, the “Defenders” Roman Catholic. Some of the outrages committed by the Defenders were too horrible to put in print; many Roman Catholic families fled the country on account of the treatment which they received from the Peep of Day Boys, and took refuge among their co-religionists in the south.

But now a greater crisis was at hand. The terrible upheaval of the French Revolution was shaking European society to its foundation. The teaching of Paine and Voltaire had borne fruit; the wildest socialism was being preached in every land. Ulster had shown sympathy with Republican ideas at the time of the American War of Independence; and now a large number of the Presbyterians of Belfast eagerly accepted the doctrines of Jacobinism. Nothing can sound more charmingly innocent than the objects of the United Irish Society as put forward publicly in 1791; the members solemnly and religiously pledged themselves to use all their influence to obtain an impartial and adequate representation of the Irish nation in Parliament; and as a means to this end to endeavour to secure the co-operation of Irishmen of all religious persuasions. Some writers have tried to make out that if the Relief Act of 1793 had

been extended in 1795 by another Act enabling Roman Catholics to become Members of Parliament; and if a Reform Bill had been passed making the House of Commons really representative, the society would never have been anything but a perfectly legal and harmless association. Of course it is always possible to suggest what might have been; but in this case it is far more probable that if Parliament had been so reformed as to be a fair reflex of the opinion of the country, it would immediately have passed a resolution declaring Ireland a Republic and forming an alliance with France; for whatever objects were stated in public, the real guiding spirits of the United Irish Society from the beginning (as of other societies of a later date with equally innocent names) were ardent republicans, who joined the society in order to further those views; it is absurd to suggest that men who were actually in correspondence with the leaders of the Directory and were trying to bring about an invasion from France in order to aid them in establishing a Republic on Jacobin lines would have been deterred by the passing of a Bill making it lawful for Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament. Nor again is it reasonable to contend that earnest-minded Roman Catholics would, in consequence of the failure of such a Bill to become law, have rebelled against a Government under which they were able to exercise their religion in peace and which was at that moment founding and endowing a College for the training of candidates for the priesthood, in favour of one which had confiscated



the seminaries and was sending the priests to the guillotine. The fact seems to have been that the society was formed by Presbyterians, for political reasons; they tried to get the Roman Catholics to join them, but the lower class Roman Catholics cared very little about seats in Parliament; so the founders of the society cleverly added abolition of tithes and taxes, and reduction of rents, to their original programme; this drew in numbers of Roman Catholics, whose principles were really the very antithesis of Jacobinism.

It is a fair instance of the confusion which has always reigned throughout Irish politics, that after the Relief Act of 1793 had been passed, the Catholic Committee expressed their jubilation by voting £2,000 for a statue to the King, and presenting a gold medal to their Secretary, Wolfe Tone, who was at that moment scheming to set up a Jacobin Republic.

This celebrated man, Wolfe Tone, was not unlike many others who have posed as Irish patriots. Hating the very name of England, he schemed to get one appointment after another from the English Government—at one time seeking to be put in command of a filibustering expedition to raid the towns of South America, at another time trying for a post in India; hating the Pope and the priests, he acted as Secretary to the Catholic Committee; then hating Grattan and the Irish Parliament and everything to say to it, he showed his patriotism by devoting his energies to trying to persuade the French Republican Government to invade Ireland.



On the 21st of September, 1795, an incident occurred which, though apparently trivial at the time, was destined to be of great historical importance. Ulster had now for some time been in a state bordering on anarchy; not only were the secret societies constantly at war, but marauding bands, pretending to belong to one or other of the societies, were ravishing the country. Something like a pitched battle was fought between the Protestants and the Defenders, in which the Defenders, although they were the stronger party and made the attack, were utterly routed. In the evening, the victors agreed to form themselves into a society which should bear the name of William of Orange. There had previously been some societies called by that name; but this was the foundation of the Orange Society of the present day. The oath which at first was taken by every member of the society was to defend the king and his heirs so long as he or they support the Protestant ascendancy. (This conditional form of oath of allegiance has long since been abolished.) It was industriously circulated by the United Irishmen that the actual words of the oath were: "I will be true to the King and Government and I will exterminate as far as I am able the Catholics of Ireland." There is no evidence, however, that any words of the kind ever formed part of an oath prescribed by the Orange Society; and those who make the statement now must be aware that they are repeating a calumny.

After this time, the quarrel gradually tended more and more to become a religious one; the Peep

of Day Boys becoming merged in the Orange Society, and the Protestants slowly withdrawing from the United Irish Society; on the other hand, the Defenders ultimately coalesced with the United Irishmen and thus, by an illogical combination of inconsistent forces, formed the party which brought about the terrible rebellion.

The close of the year 1796 was one of the most critical moments in the history of England. On the continent the power of republican France under the genius of Napoleon and his generals was sweeping all before it. England was in a state of bankruptcy, and almost as completely isolated as she had been in the time of Elizabeth. Wolfe Tone and his Irish plotters saw their opportunity as clearly as their predecessors had in the times of Edward Bruce and Philip II. They laid a statement of the condition of Ireland before the French Government which, though as full of exaggerations as most things in Irish history, was sufficiently based on fact to lead the French Government to believe that if a French force were landed in Ireland, the Irishmen in the British Army and Navy would mutiny, the Yeomen would join the French, and the whole of the North of Ireland would rise in rebellion.

Accordingly a French fleet of forty-three sail, carrying about 15,000 troops, sailed from Brest for Bantry Bay. No human power could have prevented their landing; and had they done so, they could have marched to Cork and seized the town without any difficulty; the United Irishmen would

have risen, and the whole country might have been theirs. But the same power which saved England from the Armada of Catholic Spain 200 years before now shielded her from the invasion of republican France. Storms and fogs wrought havoc throughout the French fleet. In less than a month from the time of their starting, Wolfe Tone and the shattered remains of the invading force were back at Brest, without having succeeded in landing a single man on the Irish shore.

Had this projected invasion taken place fifty years before, amongst the French troops would have been the Irish brigade, who were always yearning for the opportunity of making an attack on their native land. But half a century had caused strange changes; the Irish brigade had fallen with the collapse of the French monarchy; and some of the few survivors were now actually serving under King George III.

It was a remarkable fact that no one in the neighbourhood of Bantry showed the slightest sympathy with the Frenchmen. The few resident gentry, the moment the danger was evident, called together the yeomanry and organized their tenantry to oppose the foe—though the utmost they could have done would have been to delay the progress of the invaders for a little at the cost of their own lives; and the peasantry did all in their power to support their efforts.

If it is possible to analyse the state of political feeling at this time, we may say that first there was a very limited number of thoughtful men who saw

that after the Acts of 1782 and 1793 either separation or union was inevitable, and who consequently opposed all idea of parliamentary reform, because they thought it would tend to separation and make union more difficult. A second party (a leading member of which was Charlemont) approved of the existing state of things, and believed that it could be continued; a third (of which Grattan was one) fondly imagined that all would go smoothly if only a Catholic Relief Bill and a Reform Bill were carried, and so directed all their efforts towards those objects; and a fourth believed that no reform would be granted without pressure, and so were ready even to work up a rebellion in order to obtain it; but that was a very small party at best, and was soon carried away by the whirlwind of those revolutionists who cared nothing about the Parliament then sitting in Dublin, or about any other possible Parliament which might own allegiance to the King of England, for their real aim was to sever Ireland from England altogether and establish a separate republic. As Wolfe Tone wrote: "To break the connection with England and to assert the independence of my country were my objects."

It is this party that is represented by the Nationalists of to-day, except that when they look for foreign aid, their hopes lie in the direction of Germany rather than France. I know that this remark may call forth a storm of denials from those who judge by the speeches which Nationalist leaders have made in England when trying to win the Radical vote, or in the Colonies when aiming

at getting money from people who had not studied the question. But I judge not by speeches such as those, but by statements continually put forward by political writers and orators when they have cast off the mask and are addressing their sympathizers in Ireland and America:—

“The Nationalists of Ireland stand for the “complete independence of Ireland, and they “stand for nothing else. In the English Empire “they have no part or lot, and they wish to have “no part or lot. We stand for the Irish nation, “free and independent and outside the English “Empire.”—(*Irish Freedom.*)

“Our aim is the establishment of an Irish “Republic, for the simple and sole reason that no “other ending of our quarrel with England could “be either adequate or final. This is the one “central and vital point of agreement among all “who are worthy of the name of Irish National- “ists—that Ireland is a separate nation—separate “in thought, mind, in ideals and outlooks. Come “what may, we work for Ireland as separate from “England as Germany is separate.”—(*Ib.*)

“Year by year the pilgrimage to the grave of “Theobald Wolfe Tone grows more significant of “the rising tide of militant and uncompromising “Nationalism, more significant of the fact that “Young Ireland has turned away from the false “thing that has passed for patriotism, and has “begun to reverence only the men and the things

“and the memories that stand for Ireland an  
 “independent nation. Paying tribute to the  
 “memory of men like Tone, lifting up the  
 “language of Ireland from the mire, linking up  
 “the present with the old days of true patriotic  
 “endeavour—these are the doings that will even-  
 “tually bring our land from the mazes of humbug  
 “into the clear dawn that heralds Nationhood.”

—(*The Leinster Leader.*)

“The object aimed at by the advanced National  
 “party is the recovery of Ireland’s national inde-  
 “pendence and the severance of all political  
 “connection with England.”—(*J. Devoy.*)

“In the better days that are approaching, the  
 “soil of Ireland will be populated by a race of  
 “Irishmen free and happy and thriving, owning  
 “no master under the Almighty, and owning no  
 “flag but the green flag of an independent Irish  
 “nation.”—(*W. O’Brien, M.P.*)

“In supporting Home Rule for Ireland we  
 “abandon no principle of Irish nationhood as  
 “laid down by the fathers in the Irish movement  
 “for independence, from Wolfe Tone and  
 “Emmett to John Mitchell, and from Mitchell to  
 “Kickham and Parnell.”—(*J. Redmond.*)

“Our ultimate goal is the national independ-  
 “ence of our country.”—(*Ib.*)

“In its essence the National movement is the same to-day as it was in the days of Hugh O’Niell, Owen Roe, Emmett, or of Wolfe Tone.”—(*Ib.*)

“We are as much rebels to England’s rule as our forefathers were in ’98.”—(*Ib.*)

“I remember when Parnell was asked if he would accept as a final settlement the Home Rule compromise proposed by Mr. Gladstone. I remember his answer. He said ‘I believe in the policy of taking from England anything we can wring from her which will strengthen our hands to go for more.’”—(*Ib.*)

“When we have undermined English misgovernment we have paved the way for Ireland to take her place among the nations of the earth. And let us not forget that that is the ultimate goal at which all we Irishmen aim. None of us, whether we be in America or in Ireland, or wherever we may be, will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England.”

(*C. S. Parnell.*)

“I know there are many people in America who think that the means which we are operating to-day for the good of Ireland are not sufficiently sharp and decisive . . . I would suggest to those who have constituted them-



“selves the censors of our movement, would it  
 “not be well to give our movement a fair chance  
 “—to allow us to have an Irish Parliament that  
 “will give our people all authority over the  
 “police and the judiciary and all government in  
 “the nation, and when equipped with compara-  
 “tive freedom, then would be the time for those  
 “who think we should destroy the last link that  
 “binds us to England to operate by whatever  
 “means they think best to achieve that great and  
 “desirable end? I am quite sure that I speak for  
 “the United Irish League in the matter.”

(*J. Devlin, M.P.*)

“What was it, after all, that Wolfe Tone, and  
 “Fitzgerald, and Mitchell, and Smith O’Brien,  
 “and O’Meagher Condon, and Allen, Larkins  
 “and O’Brien, and all the other gallant Irishmen  
 “strove for, who from generation to generation  
 “were inspired with the spirit of revolution? . . .  
 “In what respect does our policy differ from the  
 “purpose of these men?”—(*Ib.*)

“In my opinion, and in the opinion of the vast  
 “majority of the advanced Nationalists of Ireland,  
 “the Repeal of the Union is not the full Nation-  
 “alist demand; separation is the full Nationalist  
 “demand; that is the right on which we stand,  
 “the Nationalist right of Ireland.”

—(*J. Dillon, M.P.*)

“I should never have dedicated my life to this

“great struggle if I did not see at the end the crowning and the consummation of our work—a free and independent nation.”—(*Ib.*)

“We aim at nothing else than establishing a new nation upon the map of Europe.”

—(*Dr. Douglas Hyde.*)

“If there is any man in this audience who says to us as representing that Parliamentary movement—I don’t believe in your Parliamentary ideas, I don’t accept Home Rule, I go beyond it; I believe in an independent Irish nation’—if any man says this, I say that we don’t disbelieve in it. These are our tactics—if you are to take a fortress, first take the outer works.”

—(*T. M. Kettle, M.P.*)

“We want to carry on the work that the Fenians tried to do to a triumphal issue. The Fenians stood for an Irish Republic, and so do we. No policy which left England in control of the Irish Nation could be regarded as final. There is only one way, and that is to get the absolute and complete independence of Ireland, free from English rule and English domination. The Fenians did not go to the Prime Minister for concessions. No: they started into arms, and if people of the present day believed in that they should arm themselves to get the independence of Ireland.”—(*B. Hobson, speaking at a demonstration at Cork, on the anniversary of the “martyrdom” of Allen, Larkins, and O’Brien.*)

“Should the Germans land in Ireland, they  
“will be received with willing hearts and strong  
“hands, and should England be their destination,  
“it is to be hoped that they will find time to  
“disembark 100,000 rifles and a few score of  
“ammunition for the same in this country, and  
“twelve months later this Ireland will be as free  
“as the Lord God meant it should be.”—(*Major  
McBride*, who organized an Irish force to aid  
the Boers against England, and has conse-  
quently been appointed to a municipal  
inspectorship by the Corporation of Dublin.)

“I appeal to you most earnestly to do all in  
“your power to prevent your countrymen from  
“entering the degraded British army. If you  
“prevent 500 men from enlisting you do nearly  
“as good work, if not quite so exciting, as if you  
“shot 500 men on the field of battle, and also you  
“are making the path smoother for the approach-  
“ing conquest of England by Germany.”—(*Ib.*)

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE REBELLION.

EARLY in 1797 it became evident to all but the most shortsighted of politicians that a rebellion, of which none could foretell the result, was imminent. As one shrewd observer wrote: "I look upon it that "Ireland must soon stand in respect to England "in one of three situations—united with her, the "Legislatures being joined; separated from her, "and forming a republic; or as a half-subdued "Province." The supporters of law and order were naturally divided in opinion as to the course to pursue. Some were in favour of a policy of conciliation. Grattan induced his friend Ponsonby to bring forward another Reform Bill, abolishing the religious test and the separate representation of boroughs, and dividing each county into districts; and when he saw that the motion could not be carried, delivered an impassioned speech, declaring that he would never again attend the House of Commons, and solemnly walked out. It was a piece of acting, too transparent to deceive anybody. Grattan was a disappointed man—disappointed not so much because his proposals were not adopted, as because his own followers were slipping away from him. They had begun to realize that he was an orator but not a statesman; his ideas were wild, fanciful dreams. Whilst vehemently upholding the English connection he was playing into the

hands of England's opponents by reminding them that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity; whilst hating the very idea of a Union, he was making the existing system impossible by preventing the passing of a commercial treaty; whilst passionately supporting Protestant ascendancy, he was advocating a measure which at that moment would have brought about the establishment either of a Roman Catholic ascendancy or more probably of a Jacobin Republic. He saw his supporters dwindling slowly from seventy-seven in 1783 to thirty in 1797. Men were now alive to the fact that the country was in an alarming condition. They saw what had happened in France but a few years before, and how little Louis XVI had gained by trying to pose as a liberator and a semi-republican; and, knowing that the rebellion with which they were faced was an avowed imitation of the French Revolution, they were coming to the opinion that stern measures were necessary. In almost every county of three Provinces conspirators were at work, trying to bring down on their country a foreign invasion, and stirring up the people to rebellion and crime by appealing to their agrarian grievances and cupidity, their religious passion, and the discontent produced by great poverty. For a second time it appeared that Wolfe Tone would succeed in obtaining aid from abroad—this time from Spain and Holland; and the rebel party in Ireland were now so well organized, and Jacobin feeling was so widespread, that had he done so, it was almost inevitable that Ireland would have been

lost to England. But once more the unexpected was destined to occur. Early in February Jervis shattered the power of the Spanish Fleet off Cape St. Vincent; and in the summer, just when the Dutch ships, with 14,000 troops on board, were ready to start, and resistance on the part of England seemed hopeless, a violent gale arose and for weeks the whole fleet remained imprisoned in the river; and when at length they did succeed in making a start, the English were ready to meet them within a few miles of the coast of Holland; after a tremendous battle the broken remnant of the Dutch fleet returned to the harbour defeated. The rage and mortification of Wolfe Tone at his second failure knew no bounds.

In the North of Ireland, however, the rebellion had practically begun. The magistrates were powerless; the classes who had supported the gentry during the Volunteer Movement were amongst the disaffected. The country was in a state of anarchy; murders and outrages of every sort were incessant. That the measures which the Government and their supporters took to crush the rising rebellion were illegal and barbarous, cannot be denied; that they in fact by their violence hurried on the rebellion is not improbable. But it is still more probable that they were the means of preventing its success; just as, had the Government of Louis XVI shown more vigour at the outset of the Revolution, the Reign of Terror would probably never have taken place. Through evidence obtained by torture, the Government got possession

of vast stores of arms which the rebels had prepared; by twice seizing the directors of the movement they deprived it of its central organization; and if they were the cause of the rebellion breaking out sooner than had been intended, the result was that they were able to quell it in one district before it had time to come to a head in another.

War at best is very terrible; and there were two circumstances which made the war in Ireland more terrible than others. It was a religious war, and it was a civil war. It often happens that when religion is turned to hatred it stirs up the worst and most diabolical passions of the human breast; and the evil feelings brought on by a civil war necessarily last longer than animosity against a foreign foe. The horrors of 1798 make one shudder to think what must happen in Ireland if civil war ever breaks out there again.

From Ulster the United Ireland movement spread during 1797 to Leinster, as far south as Wexford, and began to assume a more decidedly religious character. As a contemporary historian wrote:—

“So inveterately rooted are the prejudices of  
 “religious antipathy in the minds of the lower  
 “classes of Irish Romanists, that in any civil  
 “war, however originating from causes uncon-  
 “nected with religion, not all the efforts of their  
 “gentry, or even priests, to the contrary could  
 “(if I am not exceedingly mistaken) restrain  
 “them from converting it into a religious quar-  
 “rel.”



(Had he lived a century later, he might have used the same words.) But though this was generally the case, there were complications as embarrassing as they usually are in Irish affairs. The yeomanry were mainly Protestants, but the majority of the militia were Roman Catholics, and those commanded by Lord Fingall entirely so. There was much disaffection in both branches of the service; besides which, officers and men alike lacked the discipline and experience of regular troops; but as the supply of soldiers from England was wholly inadequate for the situation, the Government were obliged to rely on any forces they could obtain. As the rebellion drifted into being a Roman Catholic movement, the Orangemen became intensely loyal, and were eager to fight on the king's side, but the Government dreaded lest by employing them they might offend the militia. By 1798, when the rebellion in the south was at its height, the north had become comparatively calm. The severities of the previous year had had some salutary effect; the staunch Protestants had no desire to aid in what had become a Roman Catholic rebellion; and the republican party had seen that the universal fraternity of the Jacobin Government of France had turned into a military despotism which was engaged in crushing the neighbouring republics and was almost at war with the sister Republic of America.

But whilst Ulster was growing calmer, the condition of the south was becoming daily more appalling. On the 23rd of May the rebellion actually broke out in the counties of Dublin,

Kildare and Meath; and many skirmishes took place in which the losses on the king's side were comparatively few but those of the rebels enormous, in consequence of their ignorance of the use of firearms. The better-trained forces soon got to know that an Irish peasant when armed with a pike was a deadly foe; but when armed with a musket was almost harmless. This part of the campaign will always be specially memorable for the attack made on the little town of Prosperous, in the county of Kildare. It was cleverly made in the early morning; the garrison, taken unawares, were nearly all killed; the Commander, Captain Swayne, being amongst the victims. It was soon afterwards found out that the leader of the rebels was Dr. Esmonde, a gentleman of good family, and first lieutenant in a regiment of yeomanry stationed a few miles off, who had been dining with Captain Swayne the previous evening. He appeared in his regiment the next day, but was identified by a yeoman who had seen him at Prosperous; arrested, tried, and hanged as a traitor.

A Nationalist has recently referred to him as a martyr to the cause of Irish liberty.

By the month of June Wexford had become the centre of the rebellion. In that county it had assumed an essentially religious character (there being, however, a few exceptions on each side), and in no other part of Ireland was the war so terrible either on account of its magnitude or barbarity. The passions of the ignorant peasantry were inflamed by all Protestants being spoken of as

Orangemen and a report being diligently circulated that all Orangemen had sworn to destroy the Catholic Faith—exactly the same course that was followed a hundred years later. Roman Catholic priests, wearing their sacred vestments and carrying crucifixes, led the rebel forces; and the ignorant peasants, believing them to be endowed with miraculous powers, followed them with the blind adherence that only fanaticism can inspire. And yet—so strangely contradictory is everything in Ireland—there is clear evidence that amongst those priestly agitators many were at heart deists, who were making use of religion in the hope of furthering Jacobinism. Many Protestants saved their lives by apostatizing, or by allowing their children to be rebaptized; it is but fair to add, however, that several of the older priests, shocked at the conduct of the rebels, concealed heretics in their houses and churches; and that all through the war many priests, in spite of the difficulty of their position, remained loyal and did what they could to aid the king's troops.

The rebels for some weeks held command of the town and county of Wexford, their chief camp being at a place called Vinegar Hill. The country around was searched and plundered; the Protestants who were captured were brought into the rebel camp, and there deliberately butchered in cold blood. How many perished it is impossible to say; the number must have been at the least 400.

I would willingly pass over this dreadful episode. I have no more desire to dwell on it than I have on

Cromwell's conduct at Drogheda. I regard it merely as one of those terrible incidents which alas have taken place in almost every campaign. It was probably equalled in character if not in magnitude by several outrages committed by the other side; and certainly parallels could be found in the French invasion of Algeria fifty years later and in many other wars of the nineteenth century. When men have been fired with the diabolical passions that war arouses, and have grown accustomed to the ghastly sights on battlefields, they cease to be reasoning beings; they become fiends. But unfortunately it is necessary to explain what really occurred, as it is to Vinegar Hill and its terrible associations that the Nationalists of to-day refer with triumph. Songs in praise of the massacre are sung at Nationalist gatherings; and W. Redmond, speaking at Enniscorthy (close to the scene of the massacre) on the 110th anniversary of the outrages said: "The heroic action of the men who fought and died around Vinegar Hill was the heritage of all Ireland. Whatever measure of comparative freedom we now enjoy was entirely attributable to the Insurrection of '98. It was the pikemen of '98 who made the world and England understand that Irishmen knew how to fight for their rights, and it is to the knowledge of that fact by England that we may look for the real driving force of any effort we may make for our liberty. The Irish people are in no position to resort to arms, but the spirit is there, and by demonstrations like this we show our rulers that it is essential for

any real and lasting peace that the aspirations of the patriots of '98 must be satisfied, and that a full measure of National freedom must be granted to Ireland."

(It will be observed that in the opinion of this orator—a prominent Nationalist Member of Parliament, who was selected to go round the Colonies collecting money for the Home Rule cause—the possession of an Independent Parliament, of everything in fact short of separation, goes for nothing; it is only those who rebelled against that Parliament who are to be regarded as models for modern Nationalists to follow. It is interesting also to note the different views which have been put forward by Irish politicians with regard to the rebellion. In 1843 the leaders of the Repeal Association stated in one of their manifestoes, as an argument in favour of repeal, that England had resorted to the diabolical expedient of fomenting a rebellion in order to distract the country and give excuse for military violence and so bring about a Union. But the Nationalists of to-day have so completely identified themselves with the rebels of '1798 that within the last few years splendid monuments have been erected in all the towns of Wexford and the adjoining counties; some of these are bronze figures of patriots brandishing pikes, others are representations of the priestly leaders of the rebel forces. These monuments have been unveiled with great ceremony, impassioned speeches being made on the occasion by leading orators, both clerical and lay).

In order to realize the terrible position in which

the loyalists were placed, we must recollect that whilst the Wexford rebels were triumphant in that county, and the movement seemed to be spreading into Kilkenny and Carlow, there was a fresh outbreak in the north; it appeared probable that Dublin might rise at any moment; the French fleet was hourly expected, and the long looked-for aid from England was still delayed. But the Irish loyalist minority showed the same dogged determination that they had done in the time of James II, and that they will show again in the future.

The numbers engaged in the different battles and skirmishes have been variously estimated; it seems that at the battle of Arklow the loyalists did not exceed 1,600, of whom nearly all were militia and yeomanry, with a few artillery; whilst the rebels, commanded by Father Michael Murphy, amounted to at least 20,000. Yet after a terrible afternoon's fighting the rebels, disheartened by the fall of their leader (whom they had believed to be invulnerable) retired, leaving more than 1,000 dead on the field.

Soon, however, the reinforcements from England began to arrive; and the French invasion, on which the rebels were building their hopes, was still delayed. By July, although fighting was still going on in the Wicklow mountains and some other parts of the country, the worst of the rebellion in Wexford was crushed, and an Act of Amnesty was carried through Parliament. It is worthy of note that the trials of the rebels which took place in Dublin were conducted with a fairness and a respect for the forms of law which are probably



unparalleled in the history of other countries at moments of such terrible excitement; we can contrast them for instance with the steps that were taken in putting down the outbreak of the Commune in Paris in 1871. It is easy now to argue that, as the force of the rebellion was being broken, it would have been more humane to have allowed those who had plotted and directed it to go unpunished. But as Lecky has pointed out, "it was scarcely possible to exaggerate the evil they had produced, and they were immeasurably more guilty than the majority of those who had already perished.

"They had thrown back, probably for generations, the civilization of their country. They had been year by year engaged in sowing the seed which had ripened into the harvest of blood. They had done all in their power to bring down upon Ireland the two greatest curses that can afflict a nation—the curse of civil war, and the curse of foreign invasion; and although at the outset of their movement they had hoped to unite Irishmen of all creeds, they had ended by lashing the Catholics into frenzy by deliberate and skilful falsehood. The assertion that the Orangemen had sworn to exterminate the Catholics was nowhere more prominent than in the newspaper which was the recognised organ of the United Irish leaders. The men who had spread this calumny through an ignorant and excitable Catholic population, were assuredly not less truly murderers than those who had fired the barn at Scullabogue or piked the Protestants on Wexford Bridge."



A strong party, however, led by Lord Clare were in favour of clemency wherever possible; and there seemed good reason for hoping that the rebellion would slowly die out. Cooke, the Under Secretary, wrote on the 9th of August: "The country is by no means settled nor secure should the French land, but I think secure if they do not." Suddenly, however, the alarming news came that the French were actually in Ireland. Wolfe Tone and his fellow-plotters, undaunted by their previous failures, had continued ceaseless in their efforts to induce Napoleon to make an indirect attack on England by invading Ireland; and if they had succeeded in persuading the French Government to send an expedition two months earlier when the rebellion was at its height and the English reinforcements had not arrived, Ireland must have been lost. Once again, however, fortune favoured the English cause. The first instalment of the French fleet, carrying 1,000 soldiers, did not start until the 6th of August, and only arrived on the 22nd. They landed at Killala, in Mayo, and were not a little surprised at the state of things existing there. They had expected to find a universal feeling of republicanism; but instead of this, whilst the Protestants refused to join them, the Roman Catholic peasantry received them with delight, and declared their readiness to take arms for France and the Blessed Virgin. "God help these simpletons," said one of the officers, "if they knew how little we care about the Pope or his religion, they would not be so hot in expecting help from us!"

Arriving at the wrong time and the wrong place, the expedition was foredoomed to failure. The French were brave men and trained soldiers; but they found their Irish allies perfectly useless. They succeeded in capturing Castlebar, and routing a force of militia; but their campaign was brief; on the 8th of September the whole force surrendered. The Connaught rebellion was speedily and severely put down.

The second instalment of the French invasion consisted of one ship. They landed on the Island of Arran on the 16th of September; but after spending eight hours on shore, re-embarked and sailed away to Norway.

The third instalment was, however, more serious. It consisted of a ship of the line, eight frigates and a schooner, having on board an army of about 3,000 men. They arrived at Lough Swilly early in October, where they were met by a more powerful English fleet, and nearly all were destroyed or captured. Amongst the prisoners taken was Wolfe Tone; who soon afterwards in order to avoid a felon's death, ended his life by suicide.<sup>1</sup>

A fortnight later the fourth and last instalment arrived at Killala Bay; but the Admiral, hearing that the rebellion was over, promptly weighed anchor and returned to France. Thus ingloriously ended the French attempts at the invasion of Ireland. The calling-in of the foreigner had been of as little use to the cause of Irish rebellion as it had been two centuries before.

1. See Note at the end of the Volume.

By the end of the year the worst of the rebellion was over. But the evil it had wrought was incalculable. How many had perished during that terrible summer will never be known; the numbers have been variously computed at from 15,000 to 70,000. At the outset of the rebellion—in February 1798—Lord Clare had made a memorable speech in the House of Lords, which has been so often misquoted that it is well here to cite the passage in full:—

“If conciliation be a pledge of national tranquillity and contentment; if it be a spell to allay popular ferment; there is not a nation in Europe in which it has had so fair a trial as in the Kingdom of Ireland. For a period of nearly twenty years a liberal and unvaried system of concession and conciliation has been pursued and acted on by the British Government. Concession and conciliation have produced only a fresh stock of grievances; other discontents of Ireland have kept pace with her prosperity; for I am bold to say there is not a nation on the habitable globe which has advanced in cultivation and commerce, in agriculture and in manufactures with the same rapidity in the same period. Her progress is now retarded, and it is a heart-breaking spectacle to every man who loves the country to see it arrested only by the perverse and factious folly of the people, stimulated and encouraged by disappointed statesmen.”

Within a few months after that speech was made, Ireland was well-nigh ruined. All the progress in material prosperity which had taken place in the years immediately following 1782 was swept away. The national debt, which in 1791 had stood at £2,442,890, involving an annual charge of £142,716, had risen to £26,662,640, with an annual charge of £1,395,735; the exports of woollen goods had almost ceased, and those of linen gone down by more than a third; other industries showed a decay nearly as lamentable; public bankruptcy seemed inevitable. Though the violent outbreak of rebellion had been put down, many parts of the country were in a state of anarchy. In the west, armed bands went about every night houghing the cattle and murdering all who dared to oppose them. If any man prosecuted one of the offenders, he did it at the moral certainty of being murdered. The same fate hung over every magistrate who sent a hougher to gaol, every witness who gave evidence against him, every jurymen who convicted him. In Limerick one man ventured on his own part and on that of eight others to prosecute an offender who had destroyed their property. All nine were murdered in one night. It was not safe to travel along the high road within six miles of Dublin. The militia had, from their misbehaviour in the field, and their extreme licentiousness, fallen into universal contempt and abhorrence; officers of English regiments declared that it would be impossible to maintain discipline amongst their troops if they remained in such a country. It was discovered that

the rebels were forming another Directory, and, still expecting aid from France, planning a fresh outbreak. Religious animosities were more violent than ever. Government was becoming impossible; for the Roman Catholic population, now thoroughly disaffected, would not continue to submit to the rule of the Protestant oligarchy; but the only way to put an end to it would be by another rebellion which if successful would (as the Roman Catholic bishops and educated laymen fully realized) probably result in the establishment of a Jacobin republic; clear-headed men of all parties were beginning to think that there was but one solution of the problem; and that was—the Union.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE UNION.

WE come now to the great turning point in the modern history of Ireland—the Union. It has been so constantly and so vehemently asserted that this momentous event was prompted by the wicked desire of England to ruin Ireland, and was carried out by fraud, bribery, intimidation, and every form of political crime, that not only ordinary readers, but even writers who are content to receive their information at second hand without investigating evidence for themselves, generally assume that no other view is possible. Thus O'Connell boldly asserted that the Irish Catholics never assented to the Union. Others have blindly repeated his words; and from those reiterated statements has been developed an argument that as the Catholics did not assent to the Union, they cannot be bound by it.

I believe that there has been as much exaggeration about this as about most other episodes of Irish history; and that anyone who, fairly and without prejudice, takes the trouble to go through the history of the Union as it may be gathered from contemporary documents, will come to the conclusion that it was devised by great and earnest statesmen who had the good of both countries at heart. As to the means by which it was carried, there is much to be said on both sides of the ques-

tion; Lecky has stated the case against the Union ably and temperately; other writers, equally honourable, have taken the opposite side. There is at any rate very much to be said for the opinion, that, considering the circumstances and the peculiar constitution of the Irish Parliament, there was nothing which the Government did that was not perfectly justifiable. As to whether it was in accordance with the wish of the people or not, there are several points which ought to be borne in mind but to which sufficient attention is not usually given. A very large part of the nation were ignorant peasants, who did not and could not properly understand the question; and as a matter of fact cared little about it. Then of those who were against the measure, many opposed it not because they wished the existing state of things to continue, but because they thought that the Union would prevent the one object of their ambition—total separation and the establishment of a republic; their opinion therefore has but little weight. When we come to the more educated and propertied classes, it seems that the majority were in favour of the measure; and as to the opinion of the Roman Catholic section (which after all was far the largest part of the nation) I think there can be no doubt whatever. Fortunately it is no longer necessary to wade through the mass of original papers; for the evidence has been so carefully investigated during recent years by various impartial writers, and has been presented to the general reader in so clear and concise a manner that no one now has any excuse



for being led away by the impassioned statements of partisan orators. I refer specially to the "History of the Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland," by Dr. Dunbar Ingram, published in 1887.

That careful writer commences his work by stating that, dissatisfied with endless assertions unaccompanied by proof, he had determined to investigate the subject for himself, examining closely the original and contemporary authorities. He soon found that there was no evidence to sustain the accusations made against the manner in which the Union was carried; and that all the charges against the Government rested finally on Barrington's worthless romances or the declamatory statements of the Opposition during the sessions of 1799 and 1800, which, when challenged, they declined to substantiate. Then, as he proceeded in his work, he discovered that, after its terms were known and the public had had time for reflection, the Union was thankfully accepted by the two communities which made up Ireland; that the Protestants, after the first burst of clamour, were as a body converted and became well-wishers to the measure; and that the Roman Catholics, after a short hesitation, gave the Union their hearty assent and support. And finally, the whole inquiry left a strong conviction on his mind that the Union was undertaken from the purest motives, that it was carried by fair and constitutional means, and that its final accomplishment was accompanied with the

hearty assent and concurrence of the vast majority of the two peoples that dwelt in Ireland.

I feel that I cannot do better than follow some of the lines of his argument.

It is true that in the time of the Plantagenets representatives from Ireland were on several occasions summoned to attend the English Parliament; and that during the Commonwealth Ireland was incorporated with the rest of the Empire and sent members to the Parliaments of 1654 and 1657. These incidents, however, are unimportant; it is more to the purpose to point out that from the time of the Restoration onwards we find a long list of distinguished thinkers recommending such a Union; and in the beginning of the eighteenth century both Houses of the Irish Parliament twice petitioned Queen Anne to the same effect. It may be asked why the English politicians, who were so anxious to bring about the Union with Scotland, turned a deaf ear to these petitions. The answer is simple. The Scotch Parliament was independent, and the impossibility of having two independent Parliaments under one sovereign had become manifest. Trade jealousies had arisen; the action of the Scotch had nearly involved England in a war with Spain; the Scotch Parliament had passed an Act declaring that until provision was made for settling the rights and liberties of the Scotch nation independently of England the successor to the Scotch Crown should not be the same person that was possessed of the Crown of England. The Parliament of England commenced arming the

militia and fortifying the towns near the Border. England being at war with France the Scotch Parliament passed an Act allowing Scotchmen to trade with that country; it therefore was a choice between Union and War; and the two countries wisely chose Union. In the case of Ireland, however, England saw no such danger; the Irish legislature was subordinate; Ireland was bound by English statutes; and the Irish Parliament represented not the whole people but only that one section of it which was necessarily bound to the English connection; the Irish petitions for Union therefore remained unheeded. The great Bishop Berkeley, writing in 1735, strongly advocated a union; at a later time Adam Smith wrote: "By a union with Great Britain Ireland would gain besides the freedom of trade other advantages much more important . . . Without a union with Great Britain the inhabitants of Ireland are not likely for many ages to consider themselves as one people."

But, as we have seen, by the Act of 1782, the Irish Parliament had become independent—that is, it was placed in the same position as the Scotch Parliament had been; and by the Act of 1893, the bulk of the constituencies in the counties had become Roman Catholic. Except in the opinion of thoughtless optimists like Grattan, matters were approaching a deadlock; for sooner or later the Roman Catholic electors would demand representation in Parliament; the borough members would most probably refuse it, in which case war might break out again; and if they granted it, the Irish

Parliament, then almost entirely Roman Catholic, would be anxious to break the tie that bound Ireland to England.

But apart from the religious question, it was evident that the constitution, as fixed by the Act of 1782, was fraught with dangers. And it is no answer to say that not many difficulties had arisen in the few years between 1782 and 1799; for, even though that is partially true, the question for a statesman to consider was whether they were likely to arise in the future; and the rebellion, which was still seething, had made this all the more probable. First, on a declaration of war by England, Ireland might refuse to take part in it; and her refusal would paralyse the Empire. As early as 1791, Wolfe Tone had pointed out that Ireland need not embark on the side of Great Britain in the contest which was then pending; and one of his followers had advocated an alliance with France. (This is of all the more importance at the present day, when the Nationalists state that their principles are the same as those of Wolfe Tone.) Secondly, during a war, Ireland might refuse supplies to England. This course was actually hinted at by Grattan. Thirdly, she might provoke a commercial war of rates with England. This course was proposed in the Irish House of Commons in 1784. Fourthly, she might put pressure on the Sovereign to declare war against a country with which England was at peace. This also was proposed in the Irish House, in the case of Portugal. Fifthly, she might differ from England in any international question in

reference to the connection between them, as she did in the Regency question. Sixthly, she might refuse—as she did—to make a commercial treaty with Great Britain; and thus keep open the most fertile sources of mutual jealousies and discontent. Grattan's best friends had urged upon him in vain that refusing to assent to a commercial treaty made the permanent government by two independent legislatures impossible, and would bring about separation; he refused to be guided by their advice, and at that time he still had supreme power in the House. It is remarkable that even at a later date, whilst vehemently opposing the Union, he took a delight in pointing out how many ways there were in which an Irish Parliament might injure England; seeming not to realize that he was supplying a forcible argument in favour of the measure he was opposing.

The dangers of the situation were summed up by Pitt in a few words:—"A party in England may give to the Throne one species of advice by its Parliament. A party in Ireland may advise directly opposite upon the most essential points that involve the safety of both; upon alliance with a foreign power, for instance; upon the army; upon the navy; upon any branch of the public service; upon trade; upon commerce; or upon any point essential to the Empire at large." And long afterwards Sir Robert Peel pointed out that within the short period of six years from the establishment of what is called the independence of the Irish Parliament—from 1782 to 1788—the foreign rela-

tions of the two countries, the commercial intercourse of the two countries, the sovereign exercise of authority in the two countries, were the subjects of litigation and dispute; and it was more owing to accident than to any other cause that they did not produce actual alienation and rupture.

The idea of a Union was first brought before Parliament by the Lord Lieutenant (Lord Cornwallis) in his speech at the opening of the Session in January 1799. It appeared at first that a majority of the Peers were in favour of the proposal, but a small majority of the House of Commons hostile—some to the scheme altogether, others to its being brought forward at that time. This small majority, however, rapidly diminished; and before many weeks had passed, the Government possessed a majority in both Houses. The citizens of Dublin were naturally strongly against the measure, thinking that it would injure the prestige of the capital; as were also the proprietors of boroughs and the legal members of the House; and soon after the scheme had been proposed, several counties held meetings and passed resolutions against it; but as the year went on, when the details of the measure had been more carefully considered, there was a general change of feeling throughout the country. Lord Cornwallis went on tours both north and south, through both Protestant and Roman Catholic districts, everywhere receiving addresses in favour of the Union from corporations, grand juries, leading residents, and especially from Roman Catholic bodies. And, if we may believe Lord



Cornwallis's own letters, these addresses were entirely spontaneous, and represented the real feelings of the community. Before Parliament met in March 1800, twenty-two counties had passed resolutions in favour of the Union; and Lord Castlereagh was able to say in the House that the great body of the landed property of Ireland, and all the great commercial towns except Dublin and Drogheda, were friendly to the measure. The Opposition attempted to meet this by presenting a number of petitions showing that the people of Ireland were against it. Of the fifty-four petitions presented, five were not against the Union at all, but merely requests for compensation in the event of its coming about; three were from individuals or commercial firms; and eight were from Dublin alone. The number therefore was much smaller than appears at first sight. Besides obtaining these petitions, the Opposition also collected a large sum of money for the purchase of seats; in the circumstances and according to the ideas of the time, I do not say that they were in the least morally wrong in doing so; but the fact takes away from the value of the votes given; and it neutralizes anything that was done by the Government in the same way—if it can be proved that the Government so acted.

But as the Roman Catholics constituted three-fourths of the population of Ireland, it is more important to investigate what their feelings were than to scrutinize the division lists of the House, if we wish to ascertain what was really the wish of the nation. Fortunately we have an opportunity



of testing whether there is any truth in the statement of O'Connell to which I have already referred—that the Irish Catholics did not assent to the Union. The evidence shows conclusively that the Roman Catholic peerage, episcopate, priesthood and laity all gave the movement their hearty concurrence and co-operation. Lords Kenmare and Fingall assured Lord Cornwallis that the Catholics were in favour of a Union; the entire episcopate—that is, the four archbishops and nineteen bishops, three sees being vacant—expressed the same view by their letters which are still extant or by resolutions signed by them; for instance, the Archbishop of Tuam wrote: “I have had an opportunity of acquiring the strongest conviction that this measure alone can restore harmony and happiness to our unhappy country.” The Bishop of Cork wrote: “Nothing in my opinion will more effectively tend to lay these disgraceful and scandalous party feuds and dissensions, and restore peace and harmony amongst us, than the great measure in contemplation, of the legislative Union, and incorporation of this Kingdom with Great Britain. I am happy to tell you it is working its way, and daily gaining ground in the public opinion. Several counties which appeared most adverse to it have now declared for it, and I have no doubt but, with the blessing of God, it will be effected, notwithstanding the violent opposition of Mr. Foster and his party. The Roman Catholics in general are avowedly for the measure. In the south, where they are the most numerous, they have declared in its favour.” The

Bishop of Ferns presided at a meeting of Catholics of Wexford at which an address in favour of incorporation of both legislatures was signed by 3,000 persons; and throughout the country meetings, presided over by parish priests, were held to further the movement; and the laity were quite as eager as the clergy in the matter. Plowden, the Roman Catholic historian, says: "A very great preponderancy in favour of the Union existed in the Catholic body, particularly in their nobility, gentry and clergy." Thomas McKenna, the Secretary to the Catholic Committee, wrote two pamphlets in the same interest; whilst on the other hand not a single petition against it was presented by any Roman Catholic body.

When the Session of 1800 commenced, a leading member of the Opposition sadly confessed that the people had deserted them. But the struggle in the House of Commons was tremendous. The Anti-Unionists had the advantage of the oratory of Grattan, who, though he had not been in Parliament since 1797, now purchased a seat for £2,400, and entered the House in a theatrical manner in the midst of the discussion. But his vehement and abusive style of declamation could not in debate be compared with the calm reasoning of Castlereagh. The most able speeches against the measure were not those of Grattan, but Foster. Many divisions were taken, the Government majority steadily rising from forty-two to sixty-five, and comprising an actual majority of the members of the House. In the House of Lords it was relatively much

larger. But it is constantly affirmed that this majority was only brought about by bribery and intimidation. The word "bribery" has an ugly sound; and in such a case as this, it is only fair to examine what is exactly meant by the term. There is no doubt that compensation was given to the proprietors of boroughs which were not allowed representation in the United Parliament; and it is said that as the return of members to Parliament is a public trust and not a species of property, this was not a fair matter for pecuniary compensation; hence it amounted to bribery. But the ownership of boroughs had grown up insensibly; and they had long been looked upon and treated as private property, not only in Ireland but in England and Scotland also; and there were many honest men in all three countries who contended that the system worked well, as it was the means whereby a large number of distinguished men obtained their first introduction into public life—amongst them being Pitt, Canning, and Fox in England, Grattan, Flood and Plunkett in Ireland. Then in other cases when powers which had long been regarded as property have been abolished, compensation has been given. This was the case when the heritable jurisdictions in Scotland were abolished, and when by the disestablishment of the Irish Church the right of patrons to nominate to livings was taken away. And even granting for the sake of argument that this is wrong, is it fair to call it bribery? Eighty-four places were disfranchised, and a sum of £1,260,000 (which did not nearly amount to the

price which the boroughs at that time fetched in the market) was paid. Of this, £67,500 was paid to Englishmen who owned seats in the Irish Parliament; £60,000 to boroughs who had no owners; £30,000 to the executors of a deceased owner; £18,750 to two ladies; and £1,100,000 to Irishmen who owned boroughs—of which £400,000 went to Anti-Unionists who opposed the Bill. In many cases, of course, the actual occupant of the seat was a different person from the owner who received the compensation; for instance, there is reason to believe that all the fifty barristers in the house had purchased their seats, but not one of them was the permanent owner. Now, if compensation is bribery, who was bribed? Really it must be admitted that on investigation the charge of bribery, so far as it refers to compensation to borough-owners, falls to the ground.

Then it is said that the Government made actual payments to members for their votes. This charge was brought forward in a general way at the time in both Houses; the Government indignantly denied it, and called on the Opposition to prove their accusation; but they failed to do so. To repeat it now is therefore unjust. It may be admitted that amongst Lord Castlereagh's letters there is one which taken by itself looks as if a certain sum of money was to be used in bribery; but, as Dr. Ingram has pointed out, a careful investigation of the matter shows that it refers to proposed changes in the tariff, and not to bribery at all.

Again, it is argued that the lavish distribution of

titles amounted to bribery. If so, it is hard to find any Government in England or Ireland that has not been to some extent guilty of bribery—though it is true that no British Premier has ever created peerages or salaried offices on anything like the scale that Mr. Asquith has done. After the Bill had passed, Pitt created twenty new Irish peerages and four English ones; and promoted sixteen peers a step in their order; which after all is not very much more than Lord North had done in 1779, on no special occasion, when he had created eighteen Irish peerages and promoted twelve existing peers.

As to the charges of intimidation, they may be dismissed at once; the very few that were brought forward were so completely answered at the time, that even the Opposition dropped them. The presence of such a large number of troops in Ireland was quite accounted for by the fact that the rebellion was still to some extent going on, and that there was again a danger of a French invasion.

And I must contend further that even admitting that there were some acts on the part of the Government which will not bear strict investigation according to present ideas, it is only fair to remember the tremendous difficulties of the occasion. The English House of Commons was almost unanimously in favour of the Union—not more than thirty members ever voted against it; and in the opinion of Lord Cornwallis, who throughout his long and varied career showed himself to be a shrewd observer and an upright, honourable man, “This country could not be saved without the Union.”

But really the whole discussion is beside the mark. The Nationalists continually repeat the charge that the Union was carried by fraud; and so it must be answered; but it has no bearing on anything existing at the present day. For the old Irish Parliament has disappeared—merged in the greater and more honourable Assembly of the United Kingdom; and to revive it now would be a physical impossibility. The whole state of circumstances has changed; no assembly that could now be formed in Ireland would bear the faintest resemblance to that which met in the eighteenth century. As Lecky has well expressed it:—

“To an historian of the eighteenth century, however, few things can be more grotesquely absurd than to suppose that the merits or demerits, the failure or the successes of the Irish Parliament has any real bearing on modern schemes for reconstructing the Government of Ireland on a revolutionary and Jacobin basis; entrusting the protection of property and the maintenance of law to some democratic assembly consisting mainly of Fenians and Land-leaguers, of paid agitators and of penniless adventurers. The Parliamentary system of the eighteenth century might be represented in very different lights by its enemies and by its friends. Its enemies would describe it as essentially a government carried on through the instrumentality of a corrupt oligarchy, of a large, compact body of members holding place and pensions at the pleasure of the Government, removed by the system of rotten boroughs from



“all effectual popular control. Its friends would describe it as essentially the government of Ireland by the gentlemen of Ireland and especially the landlord class.

“Neither representation would be altogether true, but each contains a large measure of truth. The nature of the Irish constituencies and the presence in the House of Commons of a body of pensioners and placemen forming considerably more than a third of the whole assembly, and nearly half of its active members, gave the Government a power, which, except under very rare and extraordinary circumstances, must, if fully exercised, have been overwhelming . . . On the other hand, the Irish Parliament was a body consisting very largely of independent country gentlemen, who on nearly all questions affecting the economical and industrial development of the country, had a powerful if not a decisive influence . . . and it was in reality only in a small class of political questions that the corrupt power of government seems to have been strained. The Irish House of Commons . . . comprised the flower of the landlord class. It was essentially pre-eminently the representative of the property of the country. It had all the instincts and the prejudices, but also all the qualities and the capacities, of an educated propertied class, and it brought great local knowledge and experience to its task. Much of its work was of that practical and unobtrusive character which leaves no trace in history.”



## CHAPTER X.

### THE PERIOD FROM THE UNION UNTIL THE REJECTION OF THE FIRST HOME RULE BILL.

As soon as the Union had become law, the opposition to it died down rapidly. All the members who had voted for it who became candidates for the Imperial Parliament were elected, and Irish orators soon began to make their mark in the greater Assembly. In 1805, however, there was another slight rebellion, led by Robert Emmett. It never had a chance of success; the mass of the people, thoroughly tired of anarchy, refused to take part in it; and though the rebels succeeded in committing a few murders, the movement was speedily quelled, mainly by the yeomen of Dublin. At the trial of Emmett, Plunket, who had been a vehement opponent of the Union, was counsel for the prosecution, and in his speech bitterly denounced the conduct of those men who, having done their utmost to oppose the Irish Parliament, now made the abolition of that Parliament the pretext for rebellion. "They call for revenge," said he, "on account of the removal of the Parliament. These men, who, in 1798, endeavoured to destroy the Parliament, now call upon the loyal men who opposed its transfer, to join them in rebellion; an appeal vain and fruitless."

It will be observed from statements already quoted, that the Nationalists of to-day claim that they are the successors of Emmett; he is counted

amongst the heroes who fell in the cause of Ireland—thus making it all the more clear how wide is the gulf between the Parliamentary opponents of the Union and the modern Nationalists.

During the early part of the century, Ireland had another period of prosperity. Travellers through Ireland at the present day cannot fail to notice how many of the country seats (now, in consequence of later legislation, mostly deserted and already beginning to fall into ruin) were built at that time. No doubt much of the prosperity was caused by the rebound which often takes place after a period of anarchy and desolation; and it would not be fair to attribute it wholly to the effect of the Union; but at least it proves that the melancholy prognostications of the opponents of the measure were happily unfulfilled. The total value of the produce and manufactures exported from Ireland between 1790 and 1801 amounted to £51,322,620; between 1802 and 1813 it amounted to £63,483,718. In 1800 the population of Ireland was under 5,000,000; in 1841 it was over 8,000,000. The tonnage in Irish ports in 1792 was 69,000; by 1797 it had fallen to 53,000; before 1852 it had risen to 5,000,000. The export of linen in 1796 was 53,000,000 yards; in 1799 it had fallen to 38,000,000; in 1853 it had risen to 106,000,000; and every other department of industry and commerce showed figures almost as satisfactory.

There were, however, three important measures which the leading advocates of the Union had desired to see carried as soon as possible after the

great change had been effected, but which—as many writers of various schools of thought to this day consider unfortunately—were postponed. The first was a provision by the State for the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy. The bishops had fully expected that this would be carried. Some modern Nationalists, wishing to win the favour of the English Nonconformists, have represented that the Roman Catholic Church refused to accept the money; but that is not the case. Whether the policy of “levelling up” would have been a wise one or not, it is useless now to conjecture; for once the policy of “levelling down” had been decided upon, and the Irish Church had been disestablished and disendowed, it became impracticable. The second measure was Roman Catholic emancipation. This had been intended by Pitt and other statesmen who helped to bring about the Union; but unforeseen difficulties arose; and unfortunately nothing was done until the agitation led by O’Connell brought matters to a crisis; and the emancipation which might have been carried gracefully years before, and in that case would have strengthened the Union, was grudgingly yielded in 1829.

The third measure was a readjustment of tithes. All will now admit, and very many politicians and thinkers at the time fully realized, that the old law as to tithes was a cruel injustice; but no change was made until the opposition to the payment of tithes amounted to something like civil war, involving a series of murders and outrages. Then the fatal precedent was set of a successful and violent revolt

against contracts and debts. In 1838 an Act was passed commuting the tithes into a rent-charge payable not by the occupiers but the landlords. Some modern writers have argued that the change was merely a matter of form, as the landlords increased the rents in proportion; and it seems such a natural thing to have happened that earlier writers may well be excused for assuming that it actually occurred. But there is no excuse for repeating the charge now; for in consequence of recent legislation it has been necessary for the Land Courts to investigate the history of rents from a period commencing before 1838; and the result of their examination has elicited the strange fact that in thousands of cases the rent remained exactly the same that it had been before the Tithe Commutation Act was passed.

BUT ere long economic causes were at work which tended to check the prosperity of Ireland. It was soon found that the proportion which by the Act of Union Ireland was to contribute to the Imperial Government was too large for the country to bear. The funded debt of Ireland which amounted to £28,000,000 in 1800 rose by 1817 to £130,000,000; in that year the whole liability was taken over by the Imperial Government. Then the fall in prices which naturally resulted from the peace of 1815 pressed heavily on an agricultural community. Improvements in machinery and the development of steam power squeezed out the handlooms of Ulster and the watermills of other parts of the country. Wages were low; and the people who

depended mainly on the potato were underfed and undernourished. In 1846 and 1847 came the two terrible blows to Ireland—first, the potato disease; and then the Repeal of the Corn Laws, which made the profitable growing of wheat with its accompanying industries, impossible. During the fearful years of the potato famine, it is only too probable that some of the efforts for relief were unwisely conducted and that some persons sadly failed in their duties; no measures or men in the world are ever perfect; and the difficulties not only of obtaining food but of getting it to the starving people in days when there were few railways and no motors were enormous. But when modern writers shower wholesale abuse over the landlords of the period, and even hint that they brought about the famine, it is well to turn to the writings of an ardent Home Ruler, who was himself an eye-witness, having lived as a boy through the famine time in one of the districts that suffered most—Mr. A. M. Sullivan. He says :—

“The conduct of the Irish landlords through-  
“out the famine period has been variously  
“described, and has been, I believe, generally  
“condemned. I consider the censure visited on  
“them too sweeping. I hold it to be in some  
“respects cruelly unjust. On many of them no  
“blame too heavy could possibly fall. A large  
“number were permanent absentees; their ranks  
“were swelled by several who early fled the post  
“of duty at home—cowardly and selfish deserters

"of a brave and faithful people. Of those who  
 "remained, some may have grown callous; it is  
 "impossible to contest authentic instances of  
 "brutal heartlessness here and there. But  
 "granting all that has to be entered on the dark  
 "debtor side, the overwhelming balance is the  
 "other way. The bulk of the resident Irish  
 "landlords manfully did their best in that dread  
 "hour . . . . No adequate tribute has ever been  
 "paid to the memory of those Irish landlords—  
 "and they were men of every party and creed—  
 "who perished martyrs to duty in that awful  
 "time; who did not fly the plague-reeking work-  
 "houses or fever-tainted court. Their names  
 "would make a goodly roll of honour . . . If  
 "they did too little compared with what the  
 "landlord class in England would have done in  
 "similar case, it was because little was in their  
 "power. The famine found most of the resident  
 "gentry of Ireland on the brink of ruin. They  
 "were heritors of estates heavily overweighted  
 "with the debts of a bygone generation. Broad  
 "lands and lordly mansions were held by them  
 "on settlements and conditions that allowed  
 "small scope for the exercise of individual  
 "liberality. To these landlords the failure of  
 "one year's rental receipts meant mortgage fore-  
 "closure and hopeless ruin. Yet cases might be  
 "named by the score in which such men scorned  
 "to avert by pressure on their suffering tenantry  
 "the fate they saw impending over them . . .  
 "They 'went down with the ship.' "



Soon after the famine, the Incumbered Estates Act was passed, by which the creditors of incumbered landlords could force a sale. This in effect worked a silent revolution; for whatever might have been said up to that time about the landed proprietors being the representatives of those who acquired their estates through the Cromwellian confiscations, after those proprietors had been forced to sell and the purchasers had obtained a statutory title by buying in the Court, the charge became obsolete. The motive of the Act was a good one; it was hoped that land would thus pass out of the hands of impoverished owners and be purchased by English capitalists who would be able to execute improvements on their estates and thus benefit the country as a whole. But the scheme brought with it disadvantages which the framers of the Act had not foreseen. The new purchasers had none of the local feelings of the dispossessed owners; they regarded their purchases as an investment, which they wished to make as profitable as possible, and treated the occupants of the land with a harshness which the old proprietors would never have exercised. Like most things in Ireland, however, this has been much exaggerated. It is constantly assumed that the whole soil of Ireland after this belonged to absentee proprietors who took no interest in the country. That absenteeism is a great evil to any country, and to Ireland especially, no one can deny; but a Parliamentary enquiry in 1869 elicited the fact that the number of landed proprietors in the rural area of



Ireland then (and there is no reason to suppose that any great change had taken place in the previous eighteen years) was 19,547, of whom only 1,443 could be described as "rarely or never resident in Ireland"; and these represented 15·7 per cent. of the rural area, and only 15·1 per cent. of the total poor-law valuation of that area.

Between 1841 and 1851 the population of the country fell from 8,200,000 to 6,574,000. The primary causes of this were of course the famine and the fever which broke out amongst the half-starved people; but it was also to a large extent caused by emigration. A number of devoted and noble-hearted men, realizing that it was hopeless to expect that the potato disease would disappear, and that consequently the holdings had become "uneconomic" (to use the phrase now so popular) as no other crop was known which could produce anything like the same amount of food, saw that the only course to prevent a continuation of the famine would be to remove a large section of the people to a happier country. In this good work the Quakers, who had been untiring in their efforts to relieve distress during the famine, took a prominent part; and the Government gave assistance. At the time no one regarded this as anything but a beneficent course; for the emigrants found better openings in new and rising countries than they ever could have had at home, and the reduced population, earning larger wages, were able to live in greater comfort. One evidence of this has been that mud cabins, which in 1841 had numbered 491,000 had in

1901 been reduced to 9,000; whilst the best class of houses increased from 304,000 to 596,000. In 1883 the Roman Catholic bishops came to the conclusion that matters had gone far enough, and that in future migration from the poorer to the more favoured districts was better than emigration from the country; but they did not say anything against the work that had been done up to that time. Yet a recent Nationalist writer, wishing to bring every possible charge against the landlords, has hinted that the total loss of population from 1841 to 1901 was caused by the brutality of the landlords after the famine, who drove the people out of the country! To show the fallacy of this, it is sufficient to point out that the powers of the landlords for good or evil were considerably reduced by the Land Act of 1870, and after that they were further diminished by each successive Act until the last shred was taken away by the Act of 1887; yet the population went down from 5,412,377 in 1871 to 4,453,775 in 1901—the emigration being larger in proportion from those counties where the National League was omnipotent than from other parts of Ireland.

In the early thirties O'Connell commenced his famous agitation for the Repeal of the Union. After he had disappeared from the scene, his work was taken up by those of his followers who advocated physical force; and in 1848 an actual rebellion broke out, headed by Smith O'Brien. It ended in a ridiculous fiasco. The immediate cause of its failure, as A. M. Sullivan has pointed out,

was that the leaders, in imitation of the movement of half a century before, endeavoured to eliminate the religious difficulty and to bring about a rising in which Orange and Green should be united; but their fight for religious tolerance exposed them to the charge of infidelity; the Roman Catholic priests (who now possessed immense political influence) denounced them; and their antagonism was fatal to the movement.

But one of the most far-seeing of the party—J. F. Lalor—perceived that mere repeal would never be strong enough to be a popular cry—it must be hitched on to some more powerful motive, which could drag it along. As he clearly explained in his manifesto, his objects were the abolition of British government and the formation of a National one. He considered that neither agitation nor the attempt at military insurrection were likely to attain those objects, but that the wisest means for that end were the refusal of obedience to usurped authority; taking quiet possession of all the rights and powers of government and proceeding to exercise them; and defending the exercise of such powers if attacked. He saw that the motive power which would carry itself forward and drag repeal with it, was in the land. He held that the soil of the country belonged as of right to the entire people of that country, not to any one class but to the nation—one condition being essential, that the tenant should bear true and undivided allegiance to the nation whose land he held, and owe no allegiance whatever to any other prince, power or people,

or any obligation of obedience or respect to their will, their orders, or their laws. The reconquest of the liberties of Ireland, he argued, would, even if possible by itself, be incomplete and worthless, without the reconquest of the land; whereas the latter, if effected, would involve the former. He therefore recommended (1) That occupying tenants should at once refuse to pay all rent except the value of the overplus of harvest produce remaining in their hands after deducting a full provision for their own subsistence during the ensuing year; (2) that they should forcibly resist being made homeless under the English law of ejectment; (3) that they ought further on principle to refuse *all* rent to the present usurping proprietors, until they should in National Convention decide what rents they were to pay and to whom they should pay them; and (4) that the people, on grounds of policy and economy, should decide that those rents should be paid to themselves—the people—for public purposes for the benefit of the entire general people. In that way a mighty social revolution would be accomplished, and the foundation of a national revolution surely laid.

But these views, though shared by J. Mitchel and other leaders, were not at the time generally adopted; and the next agitations were more distinctly political than agrarian. The Fenian movement of 1865—1867, the avowed object of which was the establishment of an independent republic, arose in America, where it was cleverly devised and ably financed. In Ireland it met with little sym-

pathy except in the towns; and the attempted outbreaks, both there and in Canada, were dismal failures. Two of their efforts in England, however, led to important results. Gladstone made the remarkable statement that it was their attempt to blow up Clerkenwell prison that enabled him to carry the Act for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. Many years afterwards, when this encouragement to incendiarism had done its work, he denied that he had ever said so; but there is no doubt that he did.

Here I must digress for a moment to refer to the position of the Irish Church. By the Act of Union it had been provided that the Churches of England and Ireland as then by law established should be united, and that the continuation and preservation of the United Church should be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental part of the Union; and at the time of the agitation for Catholic emancipation the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland solemnly declared that their Church would never attempt to destroy the Protestant Establishment. This is interesting as showing how futile are the attempts of one generation to bind posterity by legislation; and how foolish it is to expect that men will regard themselves as bound by promises made by their ancestors. (The same remark may be made with reference to the promises now being made by Nationalists as to the Home Rule Bill.) The general provisions of the Disestablishment Act were simple. Existing clergy were secured in their incomes for life; the disestablished Church was

allowed to claim all churches then in actual use, and to purchase rectory houses and glebes at a valuation; and a sum of £500,000 was given to the Church in lieu of all private endowments. Everything else—even endowments given by private persons a few years before the Act was passed—was swept away. The members of the Church showed a liberality which their opponents never anticipated. They bought the glebes, continued to pay their clergy by voluntary assessments, and collected a large sum of money towards a future endowment. Nationalist writers now state that the Act left the Irish Church with an income adequate to its needs and merely applied the surplus revenues to other purposes; and hint that the capital sum now possessed by the Church really came from the State, and that therefore the future Home Rule Government can deal with it as they please. The alarm felt by Irish Churchmen at the prospect can be understood.

The other Fenian attempt in England which has historical importance was of a different kind. Two Fenian prisoners were being conveyed in a prison van at Manchester. Their friends tried to rescue them by force; and in the attempt killed the officer in charge. For this crime, three of them—Allen, Larkin and O'Brien—were tried, convicted and hanged in November 1867. These were the “Manchester Martyrs,” in honour of whose unflinching fidelity to faith and country (to quote the words of Archbishop Croke) so many memorial crosses have been erected, and solemn demonstrations are held



every year to this day. At the unveiling of the memorial cross at Limerick the orator said : "Allen, "Larkin and O'Brien died as truly for the cause of "Irish Nationality as did any of the heroes of Irish "history. The same cause nerved the arms of the "brave men of '98, of '48, of '65 and '67. For the "cause that had lived so long they would not take "half measures—nothing else would satisfy them "than the full measure of Nationality for which "they and their forefathers had fought."

Meanwhile another movement was going on, which seems to have been at first wholly distinct from the Fenian conspiracy—the constitutional agitation for Home Rule or Repeal, led by Isaac Butt. It commenced its Parliamentary action in 1874; but was ere long broken up by the more violent spirits within its own ranks. As had so frequently happened in similar movements in Ireland, France and elsewhere, the moderate men were thrust aside, and the extremists carried all before them. Fenianism, though apparently crushed in Ireland, continued to flourish in America. Michael Davitt, who had been a prominent member both of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood and of the Fenian Society, had been convicted of treason felony, and sentenced to penal servitude. On his release in 1877, he was received as a hero, and amongst those who took part in the welcome to him were C. S. Parnell, J. G. Biggar, J. Carey, D. Curley and J. Brady. He went to America and there matured the plan of his operations on the lines laid down by Lalor, which he



proceeded to carry out in Ireland in 1879 by means of a Society which was at first called the "Land League" but which has since been known by various other names. Amongst his allies were J. Devoy, O'Donovan Rossa, and Patrick Ford. Devoy and Rossa took an active part in establishing the Skirmishing Fund, which was subscribed for the purpose of levying war on England with dynamite. Rossa afterwards publicly boasted that he had placed an infernal machine on board H.M.S. "Dottrell," and had sent it and all its crew to the bottom of the ocean. As a reward for his patriotic conduct he was some years later granted a pension by the County Council of Cork, payable out of the rates. Ford was the ablest and most powerful of the number, for by means of his paper—the *Irish World*—he collected vast sums for the Parliamentary party. In this paper he strongly advocated the use of dynamite as a blessed agent which should be availed of by the Irish people in their holy war; and elaborated a scheme for setting fire to London in fifty places on a windy night. After D. Curley and J. Brady had been hanged for the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, he collected money for a testimonial to them as heroes, and prayed that God would send Ireland more men with hearts like that of J. Brady. Mr. Redmond has recently described him as "the grand old "veteran, who through his newspaper has done "more for the last thirty or forty years for Ireland "than almost any man alive"; Mr. T. P. O'Connor has congratulated him on the great work he is

doing for Ireland; and Mr. Devlin has eulogized him for "the brilliancy in the exposition of the principles inculcated in our programme."

By 1880 the union between the Dynamite party in America (which bore many names, such as the Fenian Society, the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, the Invincibles, the Clan-na-gael, and the Physical Force party, but was essentially the same movement throughout), the constitutional agitators for Home Rule in Parliament, and the Land Leaguers in Ireland, was complete. It was but natural that it should be so, for their objects were the same, though their methods differed according to circumstances. The American party (according to their own statements) desired the achievement of a National Parliament so as to give them a footing on Irish soil—to give them the agencies and instrumentalities for a Government *de facto* at the very commencement of the Irish struggle—to give them the plant of an armed revolution. Hence they gladly contributed large sums for the Parliamentary Fund. Parnell, the leader of the Parliamentary party, stated that a true revolutionary movement should partake of a constitutional and an illegal character; it should be both an open and a secret organization, using the constitution for its own purpose and also taking advantage of the secret combination; and (as the judges at the Parnell Commission reported) the Land League was established with the intention of bringing about the independence of Ireland as a separate nation.

In the preceding autumn the agitation against

the payment of rent had begun; and persons of ordinary intelligence could see that a fresh outbreak of anarchy was imminent. But Gladstone, when coming into power in March 1880, assumed that air of easy optimism which his successors in more recent times have imitated; and publicly stated that there was in Ireland an absence of crime and outrage and a general sense of comfort and satisfaction such as had been unknown in the previous history of the country. His Chief Secretary, Forster, however, had not been long in Ireland before he realized that this was the dream of a madman; and that the Government must either act or abdicate in favour of anarchy; but the Cabinet refused to support him. Before the end of the year the Government had practically abdicated, and the rule of the Land League was the only form of Government in force in a large part of the country. The name of the unfortunate Captain Boycott will be for ever associated with the means the League employed to enforce their orders. What those means were, was explained by Gladstone himself:—

“What is meant by boycotting? In the first place it is combined intimidation. In the second place, it is combined intimidation made use of for the purpose of destroying the private liberties of choice by fear of ruin and starvation. In the third place, that which stands in the rear of boycotting and by which alone boycotting can in the long run be made thoroughly effective, is the murder which is not to be denounced.”

And a few years later—1886—the Official Report of the Cowper Commission stated it more fully :—

“The people are more afraid of boycotting, “which depends for its success on the probability “of outrage, than they are of the judgments of “the Courts of Justice. The unwritten law in “some districts is supreme. We deem it right “to call attention to the terrible ordeal that a “boycotted person has to undergo, which was by “several witnesses graphically described during “the progress of our enquiry. The existence of “a boycotted person becomes a burden to him, as “none in town or village are allowed, under a “similar penalty to themselves, to supply him or “his family with the necessaries of life. He is “not allowed to dispose of the produce of his “farm. Instances have been brought before us “in which his attendance at divine service was “prohibited, in which his cattle have been, some “killed, some barbarously mutilated; in which “all his servants and labourers were ordered and “obliged to leave him; in which the most ordinary “necessaries of life and even medical comforts, “had to be procured from long distances; in “which no one would attend the funeral, or dig “a grave for, a member of a boycotted person’s “family; and in which his children have been “forced to discontinue attendance at the National “School of the district.”

This was the ordinary form of Government as conducted by the Nationalists; and any attempt to

interfere with it and to enforce the milder laws of England, is now denounced as "coercion."

In 1881 Gladstone carried another and a more far-reaching Land Act. To put it shortly, it may be said that all agricultural land (except that held by leaseholders, who were brought in under the Act of 1887) was handed over to the occupiers for ever (with free power of sale), subject only to the payment of rent—the rent not being that which the tenants had agreed to pay, but that which a Land Court decided to be a "fair rent." This was to last for fifteen years, at the end of which time the tenant might again claim to have a fair rent fixed, and so *ad infinitum*. The Land Court in most cases cut down the rent by about 20 or 25 per cent.; and at the end of fifteen years did the same again. As tithes (which had been secularized but not abolished), mortgages and family charges remained unchanged, the result was that a large proportion of landlords were absolutely ruined; in very many cases those who appear as owners now have no beneficial interest in their estates.

In examining the Act calmly, one must observe in the first place that it was a wholesale confiscation of property. Not of course one that involved the cruelty of confiscations of previous ages, but a confiscation all the same. For if A. bought a farm in the Incumbered Estates Court, with a Parliamentary title, and let it to B. for twenty years at a rent of £100; and the Act gave B. the right of occupying it for ever subject to the payment of £50 a year, and selling it for any price he liked, that

can only mean the transfer of property from A. to B. Secondly, the Act encouraged bad farming; for a tenant knew that if his land got into a slovenly state—with drains stopped up, fences broken down, and weeds growing everywhere—the result would be that the rent would be reduced by the Commissioners at the end of the fifteen years; as the Commissioners did not go into the question of whose the fault was, but merely took estimates as to what should be the rent of the land in its actual condition. That farms were in many instances intentionally allowed to go to decay with this object, has been proved; and this pressed hard on the labouring class, as less employment was given. Thirdly, although the remission of debt may bring prosperity for a time, it may be doubted whether it will permanently benefit the country; for it will be noticed that the attempt to fix prices arbitrarily applied only to the letting and hiring and not to other transactions. To give a typical instance of what has occurred in many cases: a tenant held land at a rent of £1. 15s. od. per acre; he took the landlord into Court, swore that the land could not bear such a rent, and had it reduced to £1. 5s. od.; thereupon he sold it for £20 an acre; and so the present occupier had to pay £1. 5s. od. to the nominal landlord, and the interest on the purchase-money (about £1 per acre) to a mortgagee; in fact, he has to pay a larger sum annually than any previous tenant did; and this payment is “rent” in the economic sense though it is paid not to a resident landlord but to a distant mortgagee. In



other words, rent was increased, and absenteeism became general. Fourthly, it sowed the seeds for future trouble; for it was the temporary union of two antagonistic principles. On the one hand it was said that "the man who tills the land should own it," and therefore rent was an unjust tax (in fact it was seriously argued that men of English and Scotch descent who had hired farms in the nineteenth century had a moral right to keep them for ever rent free because tribal tenure had prevailed amongst the Celts who occupied the country many hundreds of years before); on the other it was said that the land belonged to the people of Ireland as a whole and not to any individuals. If that is so, what right has one man to a large farm when there are hundreds of others in a neighbouring town who have no land at all? The passing of the Land Acts of 1881 and 1887 made it inevitable that sooner or later a fresh agitation would be commenced by "landless men." And fifthly, when an excitable, uneducated people realize that lawlessness and outrages will be rewarded by an Act remitting debts and breaking contracts, they are not likely in future to limit their operations to land, but will apply the same maxims to other contracts. The demoralizing of character is a fact to be taken into consideration.

However, the Act was passed; and if Gladstone really imagined that it would satisfy the Nationalist party he must have been grievously disappointed. During 1881, 4,439 agrarian outrages were recorded. The Government declared the Land League to be



illegal, and lodged some of the leaders in gaol. Thereupon Ford, carrying out the plan laid down by Lalor in 1848, issued his famous "No Rent" proclamation. It was not generally acted upon; but his party continued active, and in May 1882 Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke (the Chief and Under Secretary) were murdered in the Phoenix Park. This led to the passing of the Crimes Prevention Act, by which the detectives were enabled to secure evidence against the conspirators, many of whom (as is usual in Irish history) turned Queen's evidence. The Act was worked with firmness; and outrages, which had numbered 2,507 during the first half of 1882, fell to 836 in the latter half, to 834 in 1883, and to 774 in 1884.

In the autumn of 1885, Gladstone, expecting to return to power at the ensuing election, besought the electors to give him a majority independent of the Irish vote. In this he failed; and thereupon took place the "Great Surrender." He suddenly discovered that everything he had said and done up to that time had been wrong; that boycotting, under the name of "exclusive dealing," was perfectly justifiable; that the refusal to pay rent was just the same as a strike of workmen (ignoring the obvious facts that when workmen strike they cease both to give their labour and to receive pay, whereas the gist of the "No Rent" movement was that tenants, whilst ceasing to pay, should retain possession of the farms they have hired; and that a strike arises from a dispute between employers and employed—

usually about rates of pay or length of hours; whereas Ford's edict that no rent was to be paid was issued not in consequence of anything that individual landlords had done, but because Gladstone had put the leaders of the Land League in gaol); that the men whom he had previously denounced as "marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire" were heroes who deserved to be placed in charge of the government of the country; and introduced his first Home Rule Bill. Some of his followers went with him; others refused. His life-long ally, John Bright, said: "I cannot trust the peace and interests of Ireland, north and south, to the Irish Parliamentary party, to whom the Government now propose to make a general surrender. My six years' experience of them, of their language in the House of Commons and their deeds in Ireland, makes it impossible for me to consent to hand over to them the property and the rights of five millions of the Queen's subjects, our fellow-countrymen, in Ireland. At least two millions of them are as loyal as the population of your town, and I will be no party to a measure which will thrust them from the generosity and justice of the United and Imperial Parliament."

The Bill was rejected; at the general election which ensued the people of England declared against the measure; Gladstone resigned, and Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE UNIONIST GOVERNMENT OF 1886.

THE Unionists, on returning to power in 1886, fully realized the difficulty of the problem with which they were faced. The Nationalists held a great Convention at Chicago, at which they resolved to make use of the Land League not merely for the purpose of exterminating landlords but as a means for promoting universal disorder and so bringing about a paralysis of the law. As J. Redmond stated at the Convention : "I assert that the government of Ireland by England is an impossibility, "and I believe it to be our duty to make it so." And, as he afterwards explained in Ireland, he considered that if the Tories were able to carry on the government with the ordinary law, the cause of Home Rule might be set back for a generation; but if the Nationalists could succeed in making such government impossible, and the Tories were obliged to have recourse to coercion, the people of Great Britain would turn them out of office, and Gladstone would return to power and carry Home Rule. (This avowed determination on the part of the Nationalists to reduce the country to anarchy should be borne in mind when people now express their horror at the Ulstermen being guilty of such conduct as breaking the law.) With this object, the Nationalists in 1887 organized the "Plan of Campaign," which was in fact an elaboration of the

“No Rent” manifesto of 1881, and a scheme for carrying out, step by step, the programme laid down by Lalor in 1848. One of Lalor’s adherents had been a young priest named Croke. By 1887 he had become Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cashel. He had considered the “No Rent” manifesto inopportune; but now formally sanctioned the “Plan of Campaign,” and in a violent letter urged that it should be extended to a general refusal to pay taxes. The Plan was also approved by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and the leaders of the Nationalist movement in Ireland and America, such as J. Dillon and Ford; but Parnell seemed doubtful, and in England the *Daily News* denounced it.

However, the Unionist Government had decided on their policy, which they were determined to carry through. The main items of their programme were (1) To enforce the law; (2) To facilitate land purchase; (3) To develop the industries of the country; and (4) To extend local government. It is well to examine these in detail, so as to arrive at a just estimate of the two rival policies.

(1) The Crimes Prevention Act passed by Gladstone in 1882 had lapsed, having been limited to a period of three years. Mr. Balfour (who had become Chief Secretary) was of opinion that the continual passing of temporary measures was a mistake (as some one has said, it was like a man burning his umbrella every fine day and then complaining of the expense of buying so many new ones), as was shown by the fact that the Irish

Parliament had passed fifty-four of such Acts in the seventeen years of its independent existence. He therefore, in spite of vehement opposition from the combined forces of the English Radicals and the Irish Nationalists, carried the Crimes Act of 1887, which was a permanent measure, to be put in force in disturbed districts by proclamation when necessary. This was the famous “ Coercion Act ” which has been the subject of so much violent denunciation. But in considering the matter, one must ask, What Government has there ever been in the world that did not employ force in the carrying out of the law ? It is true that in the early days of New Zealand Mr. Busby was sent out as a Commissioner with no means of enforcing his orders ; but the only result was that he was laughed at by the natives as “ a man-of-war without guns ” ; and no one can say that the scheme was a success. In fact, how can a law be a law unless it is enforced ? The Act does not make anything a crime that was not a crime before ; it merely provides a shorter form of procedure when a district is so completely terrorized by an illegal association that injured persons dare not make complaints, witnesses dare not give evidence, and juries dare not convict. This, as we have seen, had been the case in parts of Ireland at the beginning of the rebellion of 1798 ; and the Nationalists, who claimed to be the modern representatives of the rebels of that time, had succeeded in bringing about the same state of things. In some of its most stringent provisions the Act is a copy of the Police Act permanently in

force in London; yet ordinary residents in the Metropolis do not seem to groan much under its tyranny, nor do the Radicals propose to repeal it.

And certainly the Act has worked satisfactorily from the point of view of those who desire to see the country in a state of peace and prosperity, though disastrously in the opinion of those who aim at making government impossible. Between July, 1887, when the Act came into force, and the end of the year, 628 persons were prosecuted, of whom 378 were convicted and 37 held to bail. In 1888 there were 1,475 prosecutions, 907 convictions, and 175 persons required to find bail. By 1891 (the last full year of Unionist Government) crime had sunk so rapidly that in that year there were only 243 persons prosecuted, of whom 105 were convicted, and 81 held to bail. In 1901 (when the Unionists were again in power) there were 29 prosecutions and 22 convictions. In 1902 there was a revival of crime; the Act was again brought into operation, with much the same result as before—there were 157 prosecutions, 104 convictions, and 17 persons were held to bail. In 1903 there were 3 prosecutions and 3 convictions.

(2) *Land Purchase.* The Unionist Government considered that the dual ownership set up by the Act of 1881 would be a constant source of trouble, and that its working could not be for the benefit of the country. They believed that the best solution of the land question would be a system of purchase whereby the occupiers would become owners. This of course was entirely opposed to the wishes



of the Nationalists; for if the land question was settled, the motive power which was to carry separation with it, would be gone.

Some efforts in the direction of Land Purchase had been made in 1870 (at the instance of Mr. Bright) and in 1881; but nothing was done on a large scale until 1885, when the "Ashbourne Act" was passed; and various further steps were taken by the Unionist Government, culminating in the great "Wyndham Act" of 1903. By the earlier Acts, 73,858 tenants became owners; by the Wyndham Act, 253,625. As the total number of agricultural tenants of Ireland amounted to slightly under 600,000, it will be seen that more than half of them have now purchased their holdings. To explain the general principles of the Act, it is sufficient to say that when the landlord and tenants of an estate agree to a sale, the Government advance the money, and the tenant purchasers undertake to repay it by annual instalments extending over a period of 68 years. As these annual payments must be less than the existing rent as fixed by the Land Court under the Act of 1881, the purchasing tenant has no ground for complaint; and though the income of the landlord is reduced by the sale, he is freed from further anxiety; and besides, the Government give a bonus to the vendor from Imperial funds. It will be seen at once that the scheme would have been impossible under Home Rule; for the English Government had by the end of March 1911, agreed to advance the enormous sum of nearly £118,000,000; an amount which no



Irish Government could have raised except at such an exorbitant rate of interest that it would have been out of the question. On the other hand, England has become the creditor of the new Irish land-owners for this vast amount; and in the event of Separation a serious difficulty may arise as to its repayment.

It may interest readers in the Colonies to learn that the Government thoughtfully passed a Registration of Titles Act in 1891; so that the Irish purchasers under the various Land Acts have the benefits which were first introduced in Australia by Sir Robert Torrens.

The Act of 1903 had the cordial support of a small minority of Nationalists; but to the majority it was gall and wormwood. Hence Mr. Birrell, when he became Chief Secretary, threw every obstacle he could into the way of its working; and in 1909 he passed a new measure, under which land purchase has practically ceased.

(3) *The development of the Industries of the Country.* That has of course taken various forms, of which only a few can be mentioned here. By the Light Railways (for which the country has to thank Mr. Balfour himself) remote and hitherto inaccessible districts have been brought into touch with the rest of the world; and by an expenditure of £2,106,000 the railway mileage of Ireland has been increased from 2,643 miles in 1890 to 3,391 in 1906. Then it is hardly too much to say that the Labourers' Cottages Act, and the grants made under it, have transformed the face of the country.

By this Act, District Councils are enabled, in localities where accommodation for labourers is insufficient, to take land compulsorily and erect cottages, the money advanced by the Government for the purpose being gradually repaid by the rate-payers. The wretched hovels which were the disgrace of Ireland from the dawn of history until a period within living memory, have almost disappeared; and comfortable, sanitary and pleasing dwellings have taken their place.

Even this excellent Act, however, is now used by the Nationalists to further their own objects. One instance may suffice. In 1907 a farmer fell under the ban of the League and was ordered to be boycotted. The District Council found that one occupant of a "Labourer's Cottage" disregarded the order and continued to work for the boycotted farmer. They promptly evicted him. What would be said in England if a Tory landlord evicted a cottager for working for a Radical farmer?

But even more important than these measures has been the establishment of the Department of Agriculture. The success of this has been due to the ability, energy and unselfishness of Sir Horace Plunkett. The main object of the Department was to instruct the farming classes in the most effective methods of agriculture and the industries connected with it. This by itself would have been a great work; but Sir Horace has also founded the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, to encourage co-operative organization amongst farmers, based on the principle of mutual help; and the success of

this, worked in conjunction with the Department, has been marvellous. More than nine hundred local societies have been established, for the promotion of industries such as dairying and poultry farming; co-operative credit banks have been formed, based on what is known in Germany as the Raffeisen system. The turnover of these societies in 1908 amounted to more than £2,250,000. Agricultural Organization Societies, in imitation of the Irish one, have been formed in England and Scotland; and so far did its fame reach that the Americans sent over an agent to enquire into its working.

Of course it is unfair to attribute the prosperity or the decline of a country to any one measure; and more than that, it is only by taking into consideration a number of circumstances and a long term of years that we can decide whether prosperity is real or merely transitory. But that Ireland increased in prosperity under the influence of the Unionist Government, cannot be denied; indeed Mr. Redmond, when shepherding the Eighty Club (an English Radical Society) through Ireland in 1911, did not deny the prosperity of the country, and could only suggest that the same reforms would have been introduced and better carried out under an Irish Parliament—regardless of the facts that no Nationalist Government could have found the money for them; and that Nationalists are orators and politicians, not men of business. The combined value of exports and imports rose from 104,000,000 in 1904 to 125,000,000 in 1909; and the gross

receipts on railways from £4,140,000 to £11,335,000. The deposits in savings banks rose from £3,128,000 in 1888 to £10,627,000 in 1908. The tonnage of shipping in Irish ports was 11,560,000 in 1900; in 1910 it was 13,475,000.

Sir Horace had done his utmost to prevent the curse of political strife from entering into his agricultural projects. He had been careful to appoint Nationalists to some of the most important offices in his Department, and to show no more favour to one part of the country than another. But all in vain; the National League, when their friends returned to power, at once resolved to undo his labours, some of them openly saying that the increased attention devoted to trade and agriculture was turning men's thoughts away from the more important work of political agitation. Mr. T. W. Russell, a man totally ignorant of agricultural affairs, whose only claim to the office was that he was a convert to Nationalism, was appointed in place of Sir Horace. He promptly declined to continue to the Agricultural Organization Society the support which it had previously received from the Department; and, with the aid of the United Irish League, succeeded in preventing the Society from receiving a grant from the Board of Agriculture similar to those given to the English and Scotch societies; threw discredit on the Co-operative Credit Banks, and denounced the Co-operative Farming Societies as injurious to local shopkeepers. And thus he made it clear that it is impossible in Ireland to conduct even such a business as the

development of agriculture without stirring up political bitterness.

Another effort of Mr. Balfour's—the establishment of the Congested Districts Board—has had a strange and instructive history. It was established in 1891. Mr. Balfour decided to entrust to a small body of Irishmen, selected irrespective of party considerations, the task of making an experiment as to what could be done to relieve the poorest parts of Ireland; and with this object, the Board, though endowed with only small funds, were given the widest powers over the area within which they were to operate. They were empowered to take such steps as they thought proper for (1) Aiding migration or emigration from the congested districts, and settling the migrant or emigrant in his new home; and (2) Aiding and developing agriculture, forestry, and breeding of live stock and poultry, weaving, spinning, fishing (including the construction of piers and harbours, and supplying fishing boats and gear and industries subservient to and connected with fishing), and any other suitable industries. Both the powers and the revenues of the Board were increased from time to time, until by 1909 its annual expenditure amounted to nearly £250,000. It became clear almost at the beginning of its labours that amongst the many difficulties which the Board would have to face there were two pre-eminent ones; if it was desired to enlarge uneconomic holdings by removing a part of the population to other districts, the people to be removed might not wish to go; and the landless

men in the district to which they were to be removed might say that they had a better right to the land than strangers from a distance, and the result might be a free fight. As the only chance of success for the labours of the Board was the elimination of party politics, Mr. J. Morley, on becoming Chief Secretary in the Gladstonian Government of 1892, appointed as Commissioners Bishop O'Donnell of Raphoe (the Patron of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and a Trustee of the Parliamentary Fund of the United Irish League); and the Rev. D. O'Hara, a leading Clerical Nationalist of a violent type. It is needless to say that under their influence the action of the Board has been conducted on strictly Nationalist lines. One instance may suffice. In 1900, the Board, having come into the possession of the Dillon estate, wished to sell it to the tenants; and when doing so, considering the sporting rights to be a valuable asset, decided to reserve them. A considerable number of the tenants expressed their readiness to purchase their holdings subject to the reservation. The Board received an offer of £11,000 for the mansion, demesne and sporting rights over the estate. The reservation of sporting rights when, taking the whole estate, they were of pecuniary value, had been the common practice of the Board in other sales; but an agitation was at once got up (not by the tenants) against the reservation in this case, on the ground that it was not right for the Board to place any burden on the fee simple of the holdings; the offer of £11,000 was refused, and soon afterwards the Board sold the mansion



and the best part of the demesne to a community of Belgian nuns for £2,100. The sporting rights, which became the property of the purchasing tenants, ceased to be of any appreciable pecuniary value, though in a few cases the tenants succeeded in selling their share of them for small sums to local agitators. When a witness before the Royal Commission of 1906 ventured to point out that the taxpayers thus lost £8,900 by the transaction, he was severely rebuked by the Clerical members of the Commission for suggesting that the presence of the Belgian nuns was not a great benefit to the neighbourhood.

This Royal Commission was appointed ostensibly for the purpose of enquiring into and reporting upon the operations of the Board since its foundation. After going through a mass of evidence, the Chairman (Lord Dudley) said that the Board had tried for twenty years to develop new industries and had failed; and another member (Lord MacDonnell) said that it had only touched the fringe of the question; and, considering that in spite of all its efforts at promoting local industries, emigration continued to be greater from the district subject to its control than from any other part of Ireland, it is hard to see what other view was possible. But the large majority of the Commission were ardent Nationalists—in fact, one of them a short time before his appointment had publicly advocated an absolute, rigorous, complete and exhaustive system of boycotting; and the witness who spoke for the United Irish League told the Commission that it



was the strong view of the League that the Board should be preserved. It was only natural therefore that the Commission should report that in their opinion the powers and scope of its operations should be extended and its income largely increased. This was accordingly done by the Birrell Act of 1909. One of the most important functions of the Board was the purchase of land, for which they possessed compulsory powers. The witness who had appeared before the Commission as representing the United Irish League was Mr. FitzGibbon, Chairman of the Roscommon County Council, and now a Member of Parliament. He had previously been sent to prison for inciting to the Plan of Campaign, and for criminal conspiracy. He had also taken a leading part in the cattle-driving agitation (to which I shall refer later) and had announced that his policy was "to enable the Board to get land at fag-end prices." He was therefore appointed by Mr. Birrell to be a member of the Board, as being a suitable person to decide what compensation should be paid for land taken compulsorily. He publicly stated that his object was to carry out the great work of Michael Davitt. And he certainly has been active in doing so; and now the agitators, when they want to have an estate transferred to the Board, commence by preventing its being let or used, and so compelling the owner to leave it derelict and unprofitable; then, when by every description of villainy and boycotting it has been rendered almost worthless, the Congested Districts Board (who have carefully lain by until

then) step in with a preposterous offer which the unfortunate owner has no choice but to accept. This may appear strong language to use with reference to a Government Department presided over by Roman Catholic bishops and priests; but the words are not mine; they are taken from the judgment of Mr. Justice Ross, in the case of the Browne Estate.

At any rate, whatever else the Congested Districts Board may have achieved, they have done one good thing; they have shown to Unionists in Ireland what the principles of justice are by which the Nationalist Government will be conducted.

(4) The fourth division of the Unionist policy was the extension of local government. By the Act of 1898 County and District Councils were formed, like those which had been existing in England for a few years previously; and the powers of the old Grand Juries (who it was admitted had done their work well, but were now objected to on principle as not being elected bodies) were abolished. The importance of the measure can hardly be over-estimated; for not only did it re-organize local government on what would elsewhere be a democratic but is in Ireland a Clerical basis; but also it may be described as Home Rule on a small scale. By examining into the practical working of the scheme we may form an idea as to what Home Rule is likely to be; and both parties refer to it as a ground for their opinion. It is curious now to note that it was Gerald Balfour, the Unionist Chief Secretary, who, when introducing the measure,

appealed to the Irish gentry not to stand aloof from the new order of things, but to seek from the suffrages of their fellow-citizens that position which no others were so well qualified to fill as themselves—in much the same way that English Radical orators now accuse the Ulstermen of want of patriotism when they declare that they will never take part in a Nationalist Government. The Nationalists were of course loud in their protestations that in the noble work of local government all narrow political and sectarian bitterness would be put aside, and all Irishmen irrespective of creed, class or party would be welcome to take part—just as they are now when they promise the same about the National Parliament. Thus J. Redmond said :

“No man’s politics or religion will be allowed  
 “to be a bar to him if he desires to serve his  
 “country on one of the new bodies. Men of  
 “different creeds, who have had an almost impassable  
 “gulf between them all their lives, will be  
 “brought together for the first time in the working  
 “of this scheme of Local Government . . . .  
 “On every one of the juries in Ireland there have  
 “been county gentlemen who have shown the  
 “greatest aptitude for business, the greatest  
 “industry, and the greatest ability; and I say it  
 “would be a monstrous thing if, by working the  
 “election of these County Councils on narrow  
 “sectarian or political lines, men of that class  
 “were excluded from the service of their country.”

And another Nationalist Member added: "We are anxious for the co-operation of those who have leisure, wealth and knowledge." Irish Unionists who refused to believe these assurances were denounced by Nationalists as bigots and humbugs. The value of the assurances of 1912 may be gauged by the manner in which those of 1898 have been fulfilled. At the election of 1899 a few Protestants and Unionists were returned. But the general feeling of the newly-formed Councils may be gathered from the following resolution which was passed by the Mayo County Council in that year:

"That we, the members of the Mayo County Council, congratulate the gallant Boers on their brilliant defeats of the troops of the pirate Saxon. That we hope that a just Providence will strengthen the arms of these farmer fighters in their brave struggle for their independence. And we trust that as Babylon fell, and as Rome fell, so also may fall the race and nation whose creed is the creed of greed, and whose god is the god of Mammon."

And by 1902, when the next triennial elections were coming on, the mask was thrown off. The *Freeman's Journal* (the principal Nationalist organ) said:—

"In every County or District Council where a landlord, however amiable, or personally estimable, offers himself for election, the answer of the majority must be the same: 'No admittance here.'"

And J. Redmond stated the case still more plainly :

“ We have in our hands a weapon recently  
 “ won, the full force of which is not yet, I believe,  
 “ thoroughly understood by the English Govern-  
 “ ment or by ourselves. I mean the weapon of  
 “ freely-elected County Councils and District  
 “ Councils who to-day form a network of Nation-  
 “ alist organizations all over Ireland, and who  
 “ to-morrow, I doubt not, if the other organiza-  
 “ tions were struck, would be willing to come  
 “ forward and take their place, and, in their  
 “ Council Chambers, carry on the National  
 “ work.”

Pledges in the following form were presented for signature to all candidates by the United Irish League (except of course in north-east Ulster):—

“ I — hereby pledge myself, if elected to  
 “ represent the — Division on the County  
 “ Council, to promote the interests of the United  
 “ Irish League, and to resign my position when-  
 “ ever called upon to do so by the — Divisional  
 “ Executive.”

So completely has the policy been carried out that by 1911, to quote the words of Mr. FitzGibbon, M.P. (to whom I have previously referred):—

“ There was not a landlord in the country who  
 “ could get his agent returned as District Coun-  
 “ cillor or County Councillor, or even his eldest  
 “ son or himself. The Organization had eman-  
 “ cipated the people; it had given them the power

“which their enemies had wielded; it had cleared  
“the road for Ireland’s freedom.”

At present Unionists and Nationalists are pretty evenly divided in the County Councils of Ulster; in the other three Provinces amongst 703 County Councillors there are only fifteen Unionists. In other words, the Act has enabled the Nationalist party to carry out the plan laid down by Lalor of taking quiet and peaceable possession of all the rights and powers of government, as a stepping-stone towards Independence.

Of course it may be said with much truth that if the large majority of the people are Nationalists they are perfectly justified in choosing Nationalists as their representatives. But that is not the point. The real point is that in spite of the protestations of the Nationalists at the time of the passing of the Act, politics in their bitterest form have been brought in, and the Unionist minority have been deprived of all share in the local government of the country.

To illustrate this still further, I may add that a General Council of County Councils was formed in 1900, for the purpose of promoting a fair and equitable administration of the Act. In order that the Ulster Councils might unite with the others, it was agreed that politics should be excluded. But after the election of 1902, that agreement was abandoned; and, rather than take part in what had become a mere political gathering, the Ulster representatives withdrew. Left to themselves, the

Nationalist General Council in 1906 passed the following resolution :—

“ That the Irish people are a free people, with  
 “ a natural right to govern themselves; that no  
 “ Parliament is competent to make such laws for  
 “ Ireland except an Irish Parliament, sitting in  
 “ Dublin; and that the claim by other bodies of  
 “ men to make laws for us to govern Ireland is  
 “ illegal, unconstitutional, and at variance with  
 “ the rights of the people.”

If such a body as the General Council of County Councils pass a resolution like this, is there much probability that the Nationalist Parliament will refrain from doing the same, should the Imperial Parliament attempt to exercise the power given to it by the present Bill, and to legislate for Ireland?

But again it may be said that though the Councils have thus become political bodies, they have conducted their business so admirably that their conduct is a powerful argument to show that a Nationalist Parliament will be equally practical and liberal. This is the view put forward by Nationalist orators and their humble follower Mr. Birrell, who in November 1911, informed his friends at Bristol that the Irish had shown a great capacity for local government and that from what people who had seen a great deal of the south and west of Ireland told him there was no fear of persecution or oppression by the Catholic majority of their Protestant fellow-subjects. In support of this, various facts



are adduced, which it is well to examine in detail, remembering the poet's words that

"A lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies."

One of the greatest powers possessed by the County Councils is the exercise of patronage. It would probably be generally admitted in any country but Ireland that there, if anywhere, religion and politics should be excluded, and men selected only for their qualifications. The Nationalists, wishing to demonstrate the fairness of the Councils which hold their views, contrast the bigotry shown by the Unionist Corporation of Belfast with the liberality of similar bodies in other parts of the country. And certainly the figures they adduce, when addressing audiences in England or writing for English readers, are very striking. Thus Mr. Birrell said at Skipton in November 1911 that he had been told that in the great Unionist City of Belfast there was only one Roman Catholic in the employment of the Corporation, and he was a scavenger. (It will be observed that here, as in many of his speeches, he carefully used the expression "he had been told"—so that what he said may be literally true, even though when he heard the statement he knew that it was false.) And Stephen Gwynn, M.P., in his "Case for Home Rule," says: "In Belfast, Catholics are a third of the population; but the Corporation pays £51,405 in a year in salaries, of which only £640 goes to Catholics." And about the same time as Mr. Birrell's oration, Mr. Redmond, speaking at

Swindon, said that in Galway, Cork, Westmeath and King's County (where Roman Catholics form the large majority of the population) Protestants held 23 per cent. of the salaried appointments in the gift of the Councils.

But when we descend from the airy height of Nationalist rhetoric to the prosaic region of fact, we find that the rates of the City of Belfast amount to about £342,000; of this sum, Roman Catholic ratepayers pay less than £18,000. There are nine hundred Roman Catholics in the employment of the Corporation, and they receive in salaries about £48,000 per annum. And as to the figures quoted by Mr. Redmond, we find that he omitted to state that not one of the 23 per cent. had been appointed by a County Council; they were all survivals of the system in force before 1899, whose positions were secured by statute; and in not one of the counties he mentioned has a Unionist been appointed to any salaried office since that date. To take the County of Cork as a specimen; there are ninety-four salaried offices in the gift of the County Council; of these nine are held by Protestants—but they were all appointed before 1899. Of the thirty-three salaried offices in the gift of the City Corporation, two are held by Protestants—but these also were appointed before 1898; and yet the Protestants pay nearly half the rates. And in Ireland there is not the slightest attempt at concealment in the matter; thus in one case a District Council adopted by formal resolution the request of the local priests not to support any candidate who did not produce a

testimonial from the parish priest; as a Councillor remarked, it was the simplest way of stating that no Protestant need apply.

But it is in the appointment of medical officers ("dispensary doctors" as they are technically called in Ireland) that the policy of the Nationalists has been most marked. Many years ago, the late Cardinal Cullen ruled that it was a mortal sin to vote for a heretic for such an office; now, however, the bishops have gone further. There are three medical schools in Dublin—Trinity College, the College of Surgeons, and the Catholic University School; and three in the provinces—at Belfast, Cork and Galway. The Medical School of Trinity College has a world-wide reputation. The students are required to complete their Arts course before specializing in medicine (thus ensuring that they shall be men of general culture and not merely of professional training); the professors and lecturers are amongst the ablest men of the day; the students have the advantage of the large city hospitals for their clinical studies; and the standard required for a degree is high. And not only is Trinity College open to all students without distinction of creed, but the College authorities have frequently offered a site within their grounds for a Roman Catholic Chapel and the salary of a Chaplain who would take spiritual care of his flock. Nevertheless the Roman Catholic bishops have ordered that no candidate who has been trained at any College except the Catholic University school shall be eligible for the post of Dispensary Doctor; and

when an election takes place (as for instance that at Kiltimagh in 1905) the question of professional qualification is not taken into consideration—having been trained at a “godless college” is a fatal bar to any candidate, however able. In the Kiltimagh case, the resolution passed shortly after the election by the local branch of the United Irish League is instructive reading:—

“That we, the members of the Kiltimagh  
“Branch of the United Irish League, take advan-  
“tage of this our first meeting since the important  
“Election of Medical Officer for the Kiltimagh  
“Dispensary District, to express our appreciation  
“of all the Guardians for the several divisions in  
“this parish for the faithful honesty with which  
“they represented us on that occasion. We feel  
“proud to know that not one of our representa-  
“tives voted for a Queen’s College man against  
“a Catholic University man. They voted for a  
“man who is the stamp of man we want—a sound  
“Catholic, a sound Nationalist, a Gaelic Leaguer,  
“and a highly qualified medical man. We  
“believe their action will meet with the approval  
“of the Bishops and Priests of Ireland.”

To one who lives in Ireland it is sad enough to see year by year the most able and promising of the medical students being driven out of the country on account of their religion, and forced to look for openings elsewhere; but to a thoughtful observer it is even worse than that; it is the beginning of the new Penal Laws.

And when we turn to other matters, where the marvellous efficiency of the County Councils exists, is hard for an unprejudiced enquirer to find. The old Grand Juries handed over the roads and bridges in excellent order; they are certainly not better now, and in many cases worse. In fact, one English theoretical Radical who paid a brief visit to Ireland, inhaled so much Hibernian logic during his hurried tour that he solemnly argued that the badness of the roads proved that the Councils had been governing too economically; and therefore what was needed was a central body—that is, an Irish Parliament—to stir up the local administration! Nationalist writers claim that the rates are going down; but that merely means that they are not so high now as they were soon after the Act came into force, not that they are lower than before 1898. It was expected that the rates would be reduced by the operation of the Old Age Pensions Act; but that has not proved to be the case. And the increase in local indebtedness is alarming.

To sum up, therefore, I trust that I have, even in this brief sketch, made it clear that the policy of the Unionist Government, taken as a whole, has been of immense benefit to the social and material prosperity of Ireland; and that the points in which it has failed have been those where their reforms have fallen under the power of the Nationalists, who have either thwarted them, or made use of them to further their own ideas. I shall next proceed to examine the alternative policy, which is being carried out by the present Government.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE GLADSTONIAN GOVERNMENT OF 1892. THE POLITICAL SOCIETIES.

DURING the Gladstone-Rosebery Government—from 1892 to 1895—matters in Ireland were quiet. The Nationalists were at first on their best behaviour, in consequence of the promised introduction of the Home Rule Bill; and after its rejection by the Upper House, the time was too short for anything serious to happen. But the period was marked by the commencement of one great change in Irish administration. It must be admitted by impartial observers that the old landlord party, with all their faults, made as a rule excellent magistrates. A large proportion of them were retired military officers, who had gained some experience in duties of the sort in their regiments; others were men of superior education, who studied with care the laws they were to administer. Living in the locality, they knew the habits and feelings of the people; and yet they were sufficiently separated from them to be able to act as impartial judges; and no charges of bribery were ever made against them. And, the work being congenial, they gladly devoted their spare time to it. Gladstone's Chief Secretary (the present Lord Morley) determined to alter all this; he accordingly appointed to the Bench a large number of men drawn from a lower social stratum, less educated and intelligent than those previously chosen, but more likely to administer "Justice

according to Irish ideas." Then the operation of the Local Government Act, by which Chairmen of Councils (all of course Nationalists) became *ex officio* magistrates, completed a social revolution by entirely altering the character of the Bench. In some localities the magistrates previously appointed realizing that, being now in a minority, they could be of no further use on the Bench, withdrew; in others, though the old magistrates continued to sit, they found themselves persistently outvoted on every point; so what good they have done by remaining, it is hard to see. Amongst the men appointed under the new system, there have been several instances of justices who have continued to act without the slightest shame or scruple although they have been convicted of such offences as drunkenness, selling drink on unlicensed premises, or corrupt practices at elections. But worse than that: the new order of justices do not regard their duties as magisterial, but political; they give but little attention to ordinary cases, but attend in full strength to prevent the conviction of any person for an outrage organized by the United Irish League; and do not hesitate to promise beforehand that they will do so. If by any chance a sufficient number are not present to carry their purpose, the names of the absentees are published in the Black List of the League—and the result of that is so well known that they are not likely to offend again. Hence comes the contemptible exhibition—now not infrequent—of men being charged before the Bench, and no evidence being offered for the



defence; yet the Stipendiary Magistrate being obliged to say that though he considers the case proved, the majority of the Bench have decided to refuse informations. Even a Roman Catholic Bishop has confessed that now magistrates too often have no respect for their obligations to dispense the law justly and without favour; and that the Bench is sometimes so "packed" that the culprits, though guilty, are certain to be acquitted.

Before discussing the policy of the present Government since it came into power in 1906, it is well to explain what the principal societies—secret or other—are which now conduct the Government of Ireland. In one sense indeed the names are immaterial; for, as in 1798, in whatever various ways the societies have commenced, they are all working towards the same end, and being controlled by the same forces.

The Land League, which was founded in 1879 as a league for ruining landlords as a stepping-stone towards independence, having been suppressed by Gladstone in 1881, was reformed under the name of the Irish National League. This was in its turn suppressed in 1887, and in 1898 appeared once more under the name of the United Irish League with J. Redmond as President and J. Devlin as Secretary. In 1901 Mr. Redmond explained the objects of the League as follows:—

"The United Irish League is not merely an  
"agrarian movement. It is first, last, and all the

“time a National movement; and those of us who  
“are endeavouring to rouse the farmers of  
“Ireland, as we endeavoured twenty years ago  
“in the days of the Land League, to rouse them,  
“are doing so, not merely to obtain the removal  
“of their particular grievances, but because we  
“believe by rousing them we will be strengthen-  
“ing the National movement and helping us to  
“obtain our end, which is, after all, National  
“independence of Ireland.”

And to make the exact meaning of the phrase  
“National Independence of Ireland” quite clear,  
he soon afterwards stated that their object was the  
same as that aimed at by Emmett and Wolfe Tone  
—in other words, to place Ireland in the scale of  
nations with a constitution resembling that of the  
United States.

By March 1908 (that is, about two years after  
the present Government came into power), to quote  
the words of Mr. Justice Wright, “the only law  
feared and obeyed was the law not of the land but  
of the United Irish League”; and before the end  
of that year Mr. Redmond was able to report to  
his friends in America:—

“We have in Ireland an organization which  
“is practically a government of the country.  
“There is in O’Connell Street, Dublin, a great  
“office managed by the real Chief Secretary for  
“Ireland, J. Devlin, the Member for Belfast.”

The organization of the League is admirable.

The country is covered with a network of branches, to which people in the district are obliged to contribute under penalty of being boycotted; these branches are united under provincial executives, whilst the Directory in Dublin controls the whole. The union between the League and the Roman Catholic Church is as complete as the union between that Church and some societies started on a non-sectarian basis became during the rebellion of 1798; as we have seen, a bishop is one of the trustees, and other bishops are amongst the subscribers; the Sunday meetings of the various branches, at which boycotting and other measures of the kind are arranged, are usually presided over by the parish priests. On the other hand, few laymen, whatever their religion may be, who have any stake in the country, can be got to join the League; in the words of A. J. Kettle, M.P.:—

“On its roll of membership there are no  
“landlords or ex-landlords, few merchants, fewer  
“Irish manufacturers. There are few of the men  
“who are managing the business of Ireland in  
“city or town, connected with the League. The  
“bankers who regulate our finances, the railway  
“or transit men who control our trade, internal  
“and external, even the leading cattle men who  
“handle most of our animal produce, are not to  
“be found in its ranks.”

In further evidence of this it may be noted that in spite of all the efforts of the League at collecting money, the subscriptions to the Irish Parliamentary

Fund do not amount to a halfpenny per head of the population; as J. Dillon has remarked: "The "National cause in Ireland could not live for six "months if it were deprived of the support of the "Irish across the Atlantic."

Closely allied with the League is the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a secret political and exclusively Roman Catholic association, of which J. Devlin, M.P. (the Secretary of the League), is President. It is also called the Board of Erin, to distinguish it from the American branch. The American branch, I may remark, is also known as the Molly Maguires, as it was under that name that it conducted the series of murders and outrages at the Pennsylvanian mines thirty years ago. Hence the Irish branch is sometimes nicknamed the "Molly Maguires." The Order is very religious, in the sense that part of its programme is to deprive heretics of every means of earning their livelihood; as a Nationalist who did not sympathize with the operations of the Order expressed it: "If Protestants are to be robbed of their business, if they are to be deprived of public contracts, and shut out of every office and emolument,—what is that but extermination?" The political principles of the Order can be gathered from the Address presented by them to Captain Condon on the occasion of his visit to Dublin in 1909. Captain Condon, I may explain, had been a prominent Fenian and member of the Irish Republican brotherhood, and had taken part in the riot at Manchester in 1867 which resulted in the murder of Sergeant Brett; he now resides in

America. In 1909 he visited Ireland on the invitation of J. Redmond; and the address presented to him by the Ancient Order of Hibernians contained the following words:—

“In you, O’Meagher Condon, we recognize  
 “one of those connecting links with the past  
 “which all nations cherish, and you are ready  
 “to-day with voice and pen to give your unflag-  
 “ging support to Ireland’s leaders with as much  
 “enthusiasm as you grasped the sword to lead  
 “Ireland in the dark but historic ’67. We are  
 “sure it will interest you to know that the ranks  
 “of the Hibernians to-day are composed of the  
 “men and children of those who swore allegiance  
 “to the Irish Republic with you.”

The Order has lately acquired additional strength by becoming an “Approved Society” under the Insurance Act of 1911. In Ireland it is no more possible for life insurance than for anything else to exist without being dragged into the vortex of religious and political quarrels.

The “Clan-na-gael”—that is, the Dynamite Club—still flourishes in America; but for obvious reasons it does not make any public appearance in Ireland; and the exact part which it takes in the movement at the present time, it is impossible to say.

“Sinn Fein” (which means “Ourselves”) is another Separatist Association, aiming at the establishment of Ireland as a Sovereign State, and teaching that the election of Irishmen to serve in the

British Parliament is treason to the Irish State. As its name implies, it desires to make use of the revival of the Irish language as a means towards the end for which it is working. It was founded in 1905. Why this Society and the United Irish League, whose objects seem identical, should be ready to fly at one another's throats, is one of the things that those who are outside the Nationalist circle cannot understand. But the Clerical leaders, who do their utmost to further the operations of the League, look askance at Sinn Fein; its ultimate success therefore is very doubtful.

Then, working in conjunction with these societies is the "Gaelic League," founded for the "de-Anglicizing" of Ireland, as helping towards separation. As J. Sweetman (who, besides being a prominent member of the Gaelic League, is also Vice-President of Sinn Fein and Vice-Chairman of the Central Council of Irish County Councils and may therefore be regarded as speaking with authority) has expressed it:—

"Out of the Gaelic League's de-Anglicizing "propaganda have already grown a series of "movements not only strongly political but each "and all making for a separate independent Irish "nation, freed from every link of the British "connection."

Were it not for its political object, the folly of this "revival of the Irish language" would be past belief. The language of Shakespeare and Milton, of Gibbon and Macaulay, ought surely to be good

enough for ordinary people; and it must be obvious to every reasoning being that at the present moment of the world's history, English is one of the most useful languages in existence. It is spoken by 40,000,000 of people in Europe and twice that number in America, not to mention Australasia and South Africa. It is the language of commerce, of science, and of a vast amount of literature. Europeans of various nationalities learn it, for the sake of its convenience; although, as we all know, one of the difficulties of modern life is that boys and girls have too much to study; educationalists everywhere complain that the curriculum is overloaded. Its position in Ireland can be seen exactly by the census returns; for the papers contain a "language column," each person being required to state whether he speaks English or Irish or both. According to the returns of 1891, the total population was in round numbers 4,725,000; of whom 4,037,000 spoke English only, 643,000 both languages, and 44,000 Irish only. And that trifling minority existed only in certain localities, and was confined to the less educated classes. The only counties in which a majority of the population spoke Irish (including those who spoke both languages) were Mayo and Galway. Yet now it is solemnly said that Ireland, being an independent nation, must have a language of its own; even in counties where no language but English has been spoken for centuries, and where probably none of the ancestors of the present population ever spoke any other language, Irish is being taught in the



Roman Catholic primary schools, and the unhappy children who might be studying arithmetic or elementary geography, are wasting their time over a totally useless language. I say "totally useless" deliberately; for the arguments usually brought forward in favour of the study, apart from the political one—that Irish is of use in the study of philology, and that the MSS. of centuries ago contain fine specimens of poetry—are too absurd to be worth discussing. The real object of the Nationalists in "encouraging the revival of the Irish language" is clearly set out in the following words of T. MacSeamus in a recent number of the *Irish Review*:—

"Most important of all, the Irish language is  
"one of the things that distinguish us from  
"England. It is a mark of that separateness  
"which it is the business of every Nationalist to  
"maintain and emphasise on every possible  
"occasion. It is one of the signs—perhaps the  
"chief sign—of nationality . . . . The Irish  
"language is a weapon in our fight against  
"England, and we cannot afford to throw away  
"even the smallest weapon that may serve us in  
"that struggle."

And the policy of the League as regards the primary schools is made quite clear by the resolution passed unanimously at their annual meeting in 1912:—

"That we re-affirm the demand of the last Ard  
"Fheis in regard to the position of Irish in the

"primary schools, viz., that Irish be the sole  
 "medium of instruction in the Irish-speaking  
 "districts; that it be the medium as far as  
 "possible in all other schools, and that it be a  
 "compulsory subject in every school throughout  
 "the country where parents are not opposed to  
 "it; furthermore, that a knowledge of Irish be  
 "required from all teachers entering for training  
 "as teachers, and that no certificate be issued to  
 "those who fail to qualify in Irish at the final  
 "examination, and that none but inspectors  
 "having a knowledge of Irish be employed to  
 "inspect schools where Irish is taught."

It will be seen therefore that if the League carry  
 their point (as no doubt they will under a Home  
 Rule Government) no graduate of the Belfast  
 University who wishes to become a teacher in a  
 Belfast school will be allowed to do so unless he  
 passes an examination in a language which not one  
 of his pupils will ever wish to learn; and this, not  
 for the purpose of ensuring general culture, but to  
 further a political object with which he has no  
 sympathy.

The League leave no stone unturned in their  
 efforts to substitute the Irish for the English lan-  
 guage. For instance, it is usually considered in  
 other countries that the names of the streets of a  
 town are put up in order to help people who want  
 to find their way, and not for political reasons.  
 But in Dublin, where not one per cent. of the people  
 can read Irish, the names have recently all been  
 painted up in that language, in the hope of de-

Anglicizing the rising generation. An incident occurred recently which will show how the movement is being taken up. There is in Dublin an excellent regulation that children may not become "street traders" without a licence. A bright little boy came to apply for one. The magistrate, being a kindly man, enquired of the lad what his circumstances were. The boy explained that part of his earnings went towards the support of his widowed mother; and that he was trying to keep up his education by attending a night school. "And what are you learning there?" said the magistrate. "Irish," replied the boy. Even the magistrate could not resist telling him that he thought his time would be better spent at Arithmetic. Yet from the boy's point of view, there is something to be said. Irish may be of use to him in obtaining a Government appointment, however small; for local bodies (such as the Dublin Boards of Guardians) now refuse to appoint clerks who cannot send out notices of meetings in Irish, though no member of the Board to whom they are sent can read them; and the League fully expect that the Home Rule Government will do the same with regard to every appointment in their gift. If the railways are taken over by the Government (as they probably will be) it can be seen what an immense impetus can be given to the movement.

Then Secondary Schools have been established for the same object. The *Irish Educational Review* recently contained the following account of one of them:—

“At Ring, in the County Waterford, there is  
 “already in existence an Irish secondary school  
 “where classics, modern languages and all the  
 “usual secondary school subjects are taught and  
 “where Irish and English fill their rightful places,  
 “the former being the ordinary language of the  
 “school, the latter a foreign language on no  
 “higher level than French or German.”

The Act of 1909, which founded the “National” University (to which I shall refer again), gave power to County Councils to levy a rate for scholarships. Immediately the Gaelic League saw their opportunity. They endeavoured to persuade the Councils to refuse to do so unless Irish were made compulsory at the University. The Councils generally (except of course in Ulster) agreed to the plan; but some of them (such as the Kildare Council) were faced by a difficulty. Not a single child in the county spoke Irish; and so if that language were made compulsory, no one could compete for the scholarships. So they compromised matters, by deciding that they would levy a rate if Irish were made compulsory after 1915, by which time some of the young people in the county would have been able to learn it; and the University agreed to do so.

This rating power, I may remark, looks extremely liberal as it appears in the Act; for the scholarships are to be tenable at any University. The Irish Unionist members, knowing quite well how it would be worked, opposed the clause; and as usual were

denounced as bigots and fanatics. It is needless to add that as soon as the Act came into force, County Councils and Corporations at once passed resolutions that scholarships derived from the rates should not be tenable at Trinity College, Dublin, or at Belfast, but only at the National University--thus practically saying that no Protestants need compete.

Beyond forcing the children to acquire a smattering of Irish, it cannot be said that so far the efforts of the League as to the language have been very successful; for the census returns show that the proportion of the population who could speak Irish in 1891 was 14'5; in 1901, 14'4; and in 1911, 13'3; and the numbers who spoke Irish only fell from 20,953 in 1901 to 16,870 in 1911.

But the efforts of the League are not confined to the language. English games, such as cricket, are forbidden; if football is played, it must be the Gaelic variety with rules totally different from those observed by the hated Saxon. Even the patients in asylums are forbidden to play cricket or lawn tennis. And some of the more enthusiastic members of the League have actually "donned the saffron," in imitation of the Ersefied Normans of 400 years ago. However, it is so hideously ugly, and so suggestive of the obnoxious Orange, that that phase of the movement is not likely to extend.

Even the "Boy Scout" movement has been made use of for the same object. As soon as some corps had been established in Ireland, the Nationalists started a rival organization with an Irish name,

in which all the boys solemnly undertake to work for the independence of Ireland, and never to join England's armed forces. The boys take a prominent part in the annual ceremonies in honour of Wolfe Tone, the Manchester martyrs, and other Nationalist heroes.

The whole thing would be laughable if it were not so very sad. Even such matters as sports and education, where all creeds and parties might be expected to work together amicably, must be used as instruments to bring about separation; and the result already is not so much to widen the gulf between Ireland and England as the gulf between the two parties in Ireland; for the Protestant minority in the south, who know that most of their children will have to leave the country, are not likely to let them fritter away their youth in the study of a language which can be of no possible benefit to them in any part of the world to which they may go; and the idea that the Ulstermen will ever adopt a Celtic tongue is too ridiculous to be considered. But perhaps the most painful thought of all is that the Nationalists should be ready even to sacrifice the prospects in life of the rising generation of the country in order to satisfy their blind hatred of England.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### IRELAND UNDER THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

I COME now to the policy which has been pursued by the present Government since 1906. It must be remembered that the Radical party returned to power pledged to Home Rule as a principle, but with a sufficient majority to enable them to retain office without depending on the Irish vote. Hence there was no necessity for them to introduce a Home Rule Bill; but of course they set aside the policy of the Unionist Government, and resolved to govern Ireland according to their own ideas. What those ideas were, and what the result has been, I shall now proceed to show; but in doing so I shall as far as possible confine myself to quotations and statistics which can be verified, so that I may not be accused of giving an unfair report.

The Chief Secretary for the first year was Mr. Bryce, who was afterwards appointed British Ambassador at Washington. The Government at once repealed the Act which forbade the carrying of arms without a licence; withdrew all proclamations under the Crimes Act of 1887; and resolved not to stop any political meetings. Accordingly the Nationalists commenced holding a series of demonstrations all over the country. A few specimens taken from the speeches made at them will suffice to show their general tenour.

“Let them all be ready, and when England



“got into trouble with European Powers, they  
“would pounce upon her with the ferocity of a  
“tiger.”—*T. Walsh, District Councillor.*

“They must stand together as one man, and  
“make it impossible for England to govern  
“Ireland.”—*P. White, M.P.*

“If there had been 100,000 Fenians in Ireland  
“at the time of the Boer War there might now  
“have been a Republic in Ireland, and British  
“supremacy would have been tumbled in the  
“dust.”—*J. Daly, formerly Mayor of Limerick.*

And Mr. Bryce, when leaving Ireland at the end of the year, stated that he had not found any harm in any of the speeches delivered at the meetings.

At this time the agitation began to assume a new form. One of the most important of Irish industries is the cattle trade with England, the annual value of which exceeds £14,000,000. In several parts of Ireland, notably in Meath and the central counties, the soil and climate are specially suited for cattle raising, and the land is generally held in large grazing farms. It was decided by the Nationalists in the autumn of 1906 that this industry must be destroyed. Bodies of men assembled night after night to break down the fences and gates of the farms and drive the cattle many miles away, in order that the farmers might be ruined and forced to leave the country; and then the derelict farms would be divided amongst the “landless men.”

L. Ginnell, M.P., explained the programme fully in a speech he made in October 1906 :—

“ The ranches must be broken up, not only in  
“ Westmeath but throughout all Ireland . . . He  
“ advised them to stamp out the ranch demon  
“ themselves, and not leave an alien Parliament  
“ to do the duty . . . He advised them to leave  
“ the ranches unfenced, unused and unusable . . .  
“ so that no man or demon would dare to stand  
“ another hour between the people and the land  
“ that should be theirs.”

The agitation, commencing in Meath, was gradually extended, county by county, over a large part of Ireland where the Nationalists are supreme. Other measures were resorted to, in order to carry out their object. Arson, the burning of hayricks, firing into dwelling-houses, spiking meadows, the mutilation of horses and cows, the destruction of turf, the damaging of machinery, and various other forms of lawless violence began to increase and multiply. At the Spring Assizes in 1907, the Chief Justice, when addressing the Grand Jury at Ennis, in commenting on the increasing need for placing law-abiding people under special police protection, said :—

“ In a shire in England, if it was found neces-  
“ sary, either by special protection or protection  
“ by patrol, to protect from risk of outrage thirty  
“ persons, what would be thought ? ”

And Mr. Justice Kenny at Leitrim, after com-

menting upon the increased number of specially reported cases, as shown by the official statistics, and alluding to several cases of gross intimidation, said :—

“ In these latter cases I regret to say no one  
 “has been made amenable; and when there is  
 “such a state of things, it justifies the observation  
 “made by the learned judge who presided at last  
 “Connaught Winter Assizes, that when the chain  
 “of terrorism was complete, no witness would  
 “give evidence and no jury would convict.”

Thereupon Mr. Birrell, who at the beginning of the year had succeeded Mr. Bryce as Chief Secretary, having no doubt studied these and similar reports, said in a speech at Halifax in the following month :—

“ You may take my word for this, that Ireland  
 “is at this moment in a more peaceful condition  
 “than for the last six hundred years.”

Soon afterwards, Mr. Justice Ross, who, as Judge of the Land Judge’s Court, Chancery Division, was in charge of many estates in Ireland, said :

“ He had known from other Receivers about  
 “this widespread and audacious conspiracy at  
 “present rampant in the West of Ireland . . .  
 “This was actually a conspiracy which on  
 “ordinary moral grounds amounted to highway  
 “robbery, to seize on these grass lands, to drive  
 “away the stock of the people who had been in  
 “the habit of taking it; and then, when the owner

“had been starved out, the Estates Commis-  
“sioners were expected to buy up the property  
“and to distribute it amongst the very people who  
“had been urging on the business, and who had  
“been engaged in these outrages.”

When an Ulster member drew attention to this in the House of Commons, Mr. Birrell replied :—

“ There is no evidence before the Government  
“that a widespread conspiracy is rampant in the  
“West of Ireland.”

And in reply to another question he said that :—

“ The reports he received from the police and  
“other persons revealed the condition of Ireland  
“generally as to peace and order as being very  
“satisfactory.”

During the month of October 1907, twenty-nine claims for compensation from the rates in respect of malicious injuries had been proved and granted in twelve counties, the amount levied from the rate-payers being about £900. The malicious injuries comprised destruction of and firing into dwelling houses, mutilation of horses and cattle, burning cattle to death, spiking meadows and damaging mowing machines, damages to fences and walls, burning heather and pasturage, damage to gates in connection with cattle driving, and injury to cattle by driving. And in November an attempt was made to assassinate Mr. White Blake and his mother when driving home from church in the

County Galway. A few days after this occurred Mr. Redmond said at a meeting in North Wales :—

“ Whilst there is no crime or outrage there is  
“widespread unrest and impatience, and there are,  
“over a certain section of the country, taking  
“place technical breaches of the strict letter of  
“the law in the shape of what is called cattle  
“driving. Now let me say first of all that in no  
“instance has any single beast been injured in  
“the smallest degree in any of these cattle-drives ;  
“in no instance has any malicious injury been  
“done to property, life or limb, or beast.”

All this time the Government adhered to their determination not to put the Crimes Act in force, but merely to place accused persons on trial before juries at the Assizes. The results were as follows : At the Summer Assizes in 1907, 167 persons were returned for trial ; of these, 57 were actually tried, of whom three were convicted, 31 acquitted, and in 23 cases the juries disagreed. The trials of the remaining 110 were postponed. At the Michaelmas sittings, 94 persons were put on trial, of whom 5 were convicted and 2 acquitted ; in 72 cases the juries disagreed, and in the remaining 15 the Crown abandoned proceedings. At the Winter Assizes 86 persons were tried for unlawful assembly, riot and conspiracy in connection with cattle-driving. None were convicted ; 11 were acquitted ; in 12 cases the prisoners were discharged on legal points ; and in 63 the juries disagreed.

I fully admit that there is much to be said for the

juries who refused to convict. When a Government is doing its utmost to suppress anarchy and to enforce law and order, it is no doubt the duty of every loyal subject to render assistance even at the risk of his own life and property. But when a Government is conniving at anarchy, and deliberately refusing to put in force the Act which would put a stop to it, I say it is too much to expect of any man that he should face the prospect of being ruined and probably murdered, and his family reduced to beggary, in order to enable the Government to keep up the farce of pretending that they are trying to do their duty.

During the first half of 1908, there were 418 reported cases of cattle-driving; and arson, outrages with firearms, meadow-spiking, and similar offences increased in proportion. The judges urged in vain that the law should be put in force. But the policy of the Government remained unchanged; the *Daily News* (the Government organ) when cattle-driving was at its height said that thanks to the excellent government of Mr. Birrell cattle-driving now had practically become extinct even in those few parts of the country in which it had existed; and in July Mr. Birrell, addressing a political meeting at Port Sunlight, said that:—

“They were led to believe that the state of  
“Ireland was of an appalling character, that crime  
“predominated, and that lawlessness almost  
“universally prevailed. All he could say was that  
“a more cheerful land was nowhere to be found.”

In 1909 matters became somewhat quieter, chiefly because Mr. Birrell promised to introduce a Land Bill by which the cattle-drivers hoped to get all they wanted. Hence their leaders advised them to "give Birrell a chance," but Mr. Redmond warned the Government that if they did not carry out their pledge, they would speedily find Ireland ungovernable. In February 1909, Lord Crewe, speaking for the Government in the House of Lords, made the remarkable statement:—

"As regards intimidation, I have always shared  
"the view that well-organized intimidation cannot  
"be checked by law. I know no method of  
"checking it."

If this is not an admission that the Government had failed in their duty, it is hard to say what is. The result of their line of action will be seen by the following table, which has been taken from various returns which the Ulster members, by repeated questions in Parliament at last succeeded in forcing Mr. Birrell to make public:—

Agrarian outrages	...	...	1906	...	234
"	"	...	1907	...	372
"	"	...	1908	...	576
Cattle-drives	...	...	1905	...	Nil
"	...	...	1907-8	...	513
"	...	...	1908-9	...	622
"	"	...	1908	...	219
Cattle maiming, mutilating, etc.	...	...	1907	...	142



Persons boycotted	...	...	1907	...	196
„ „	...	...	1908	...	270
„ „	...	...	1909	...	335
Cost of extra police	...	...	1908	£47,000	

## 1911.

Agrarian outrages	...	...	...	...	581
Malicious injuries to property, Intimidating by threatening letters, etc.	...	...	...	...	285
Firing into dwelling houses	...	...	...	...	58
Rioting, robbery of arms, etc.	...	...	...	...	31
Killing and maiming cattle	...	...	...	...	83

It may be asked, why did not the Ulster members call the attention of Parliament to this state of things? The answer is, they did so again and again; Mr. Birrell gave stereotyped replies, much after this form, with hardly a variation:—

I have seen in the newspapers a report that a few shots were fired into a farmhouse in Galway. No one appears to have been seriously injured. The police are making enquiries. No arrests have been made.

(He might as well have added that he knew perfectly well that no arrests ever would be made.) Then he would go to a political meeting and say that the peaceful condition of Ireland was shown by the small number of criminal cases returned for trial at the Assizes; and would bitterly denounce the "Carrion Crows" (as he designated the Ulster members) for trying to blacken the reputation of their country.

One instance may be given more in detail, as typical of the condition to which Ireland had been brought. Lord Ashtown (a Unionist Peer residing in County Galway) began issuing month by month a series of pamphlets entitled "Grievances from Ireland." They contained little besides extracts from Nationalist papers giving reports of the meetings of the United Irish League, the outrages that took place, and the comments of Nationalist papers on them. His object was to let the people in England see from the accounts given by the Nationalists themselves, what was going on in Ireland. This, however, was very objectionable to them; and one of their members asked Mr. Birrell in the House of Commons whether the pamphlets could not be suppressed. Mr. Birrell made the curious reply that he would be very glad if Lord Ashtown were stopped, but that he did not see how to do it. What he expected would be the results of that remark, I do not know; but no one living in Ireland was much surprised when a few weeks afterwards a bomb outrage occurred at the residence of Lord Ashtown in the County Waterford. It was a clumsy failure. A jar containing gunpowder was placed against the wall of the house where he was staying and set on fire. The explosion wrecked part of the building, but Lord Ashtown escaped unhurt. He gave notice of his intention to apply at the next assizes for compensation for malicious injury. The usual custom in such cases is for a copy of the police report showing the injury complained of, to be sent to the person seeking compen-

sation; but on this occasion the police refused to show Lord Ashtown their report, stating that they had received orders from the Government not to do so. But shortly before the case came on, a report, not made by the police authority in charge of the district, but by another brought in specially for the purpose, appeared in the Nationalist papers. This report contained the remarkable suggestion that Lord Ashtown had done it himself! When under cross-examination at the trial, the Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary who made the report was obliged to confess that he did not believe that he had, but had only inserted the suggestion in obedience to instruction received from the Government. Lord Ashtown proved his case and was awarded compensation. But the matter did not end there. He had employed a surveyor, Mr. Scully, to draw plans and take photographs showing the amount of the damage. Mr. Scully was surveyor to the Waterford Corporation. It was proposed at the next meeting of the Corporation that he should be dismissed from his office for having given evidence for Lord Ashtown. The motion was carried unanimously, eight councillors being present; and at the following meeting it was ratified by eight votes to two. A question was asked about the matter in the House of Commons; and Mr. Birrell, with the figures before him, replied that Mr. Scully had never been dismissed.

Two other instances of this period must be briefly referred to. It has already been shown how the Irish Parliament endowed Maynooth as a College

for Roman Catholic students both lay and theological; and how Trinity College, Dublin, opened its doors to all students, without distinction of creed. But the Roman Catholic Church turned Maynooth into a seminary for theological students only; and the bishops forbade young laymen to go to Trinity. In 1845 Sir Robert Peel attempted to supply the want by founding the Queen's University, with Colleges at Belfast, Cork and Galway, where mixed education should be given in secular subjects, and separate instruction in those appertaining to religion; but that again was denounced as a "satanic scheme for the ruin of faith in the rising generation"; and the crusade against the university was so successful that in 1879 it was destroyed and another—the Royal University—put in its place. This in its turn was abolished in 1909; the College at Belfast was raised to the status of a University, and a new University ominously called the "National University" was founded into which the existing Colleges at Cork and Galway were absorbed, with a new and richly endowed College in Dublin at the head. It may seem strange that the Radical Government who are pledged to destroy all religious education in England should found and endow a Denominational University in Ireland. But the matter could be arranged by a little judicious management and prevarication; it was represented in Parliament that the new University was to be strictly unsectarian; during the debate, Sir P. Magnus, the member for the London University, said that he had no reason to believe that there

was any intention on the part of the Chief Secretary to set up denominational Universities in Ireland; he accepted his word that they were to be entirely undenominational. Then, when the Act was passed, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin was appointed Chancellor of the National University, with a number of Jesuits as Professors, and Cardinal Logue stated as follows :—

“ No matter what obstacles the Nonconformists  
“ may have inserted in the Constitution of the  
“ University to keep it from being Catholic, we  
“ will make it Catholic in spite of them.”

Personally, I do not object to denominational Universities. I regret that young men who are going to live in the same country should not be able to study law and medicine together; but if that is their feeling and the feeling of their parents, I admit that having separate Universities may be the best solution of the difficulty. But if so, let it be openly avowed that the University is denominational; to “ make it Catholic ” and at the same time to say that it is no injustice to Protestants that County Scholarships paid for by the ratepayers should be tenable there and nowhere else, seems to me absurd.

The other incident to which reference must be made was the great Convention held in Dublin in 1909. The Nationalists, believing that a Home Rule Bill would soon be introduced, devised the scheme of assembling a monster Convention, which would be evidence to the world of how admirably

fitted the Irish people were to govern their own country. It was attended by 2,000 delegates from all parts of the country, who were to form a happy family, as of course no disturbing Unionist element would be present to mar the harmony and the clerical element would be strong. Mr. Redmond, who presided, said in his opening address:—

“Ireland’s capacity for self-government will  
 “be judged at home and abroad by the conduct  
 “of this Assembly. Ireland’s good name is at  
 “stake, and therefore every man who takes part  
 “in this Assembly should weigh his words and  
 “recognise his responsibility.”

The meeting ended in a free fight.

At the end of 1909 Mr. Asquith did a very clever thing. A general election was pending, and he wished to avoid the mistake which Gladstone had made in 1885. He therefore, at a great meeting at the Albert Hall unfolded an elaborate programme of the long list of measures which the Government would introduce and carry, and in the course of his remarks said that Home Rule was the only solution of the Irish problem, and that in the new House of Commons the hands of a Liberal Government and of a Liberal majority would in this matter be entirely free. He and his followers carefully abstained from referring to the subject in their election addresses; and Mr. Asquith was thus free, if he should obtain a majority independent of the Irish vote, to say that he had never promised to

make Home Rule part of his programme; but if he found he could not retain office without that vote, he might buy it by promising to introduce the Bill and refer to his words at the Albert Hall as justification for doing so. The latter happened; hence the "Coalition Ministry." The Irish party consented to please the Radicals by voting for the Budget, and the Nonconformists by voting for Welsh Disestablishment, on condition that they should in return vote for Home Rule. As Mr. Hobhouse (a Cabinet Minister) expressed it in 1911:—

"Next year we must pay our debt to the  
"Nationalist Members, who were good enough  
"to vote for a Budget which they detested and  
"knew would be an injury to their country."

But the people of England still had to be hoodwinked. It was hardly likely that they would consent to their representatives voting for the separation of Ireland from Great Britain; so the Nationalists and their Radical allies went about England declaring that they had no wish for such a thing; that all they desired was a subordinate Parliament leaving the Imperial Parliament supreme. Thus Mr. Redmond suggested at one meeting that Ireland should be conceded the right of managing her own purely local affairs for herself in a subordinate Parliament, subject to the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament; and at another meeting said:

"We are not asking for a Repeal of the  
"Union. We are not asking for the restoration



"of a co-ordinate Parliament such as Ireland had  
 "before the Union. We are only asking that  
 "there should be given to Ireland a subordinate  
 "Parliament. We therefore admit the supre-  
 "macy of the Imperial Parliament. That means  
 "that after this subordinate Parliament is created  
 "in Ireland, if the Parliament is foolish enough,  
 "rash enough, as it never will be, but if it were  
 "foolish enough and criminal enough to use the  
 "powers given to it for injustice or oppression of  
 "any class or creed, the Imperial Parliament  
 "would have the power to stretch forth the arm  
 "of its authority and to say 'you shall not do  
 "that.' "

Of course it may be argued that they had changed  
 their minds; that in former times they worked for  
 separation, but now realised that a subordinate  
 Parliament was all that Ireland required. But  
 unfortunately for this theory, they have themselves  
 repudiated it; when Mr. Redmond was accused of  
 speaking with two voices, one in America and one  
 in Great Britain, he passionately replied :—

" I indignantly deny that accusation. I have  
 "never in my life said one word on a platform in  
 "America one whit stronger than I had said in  
 "my place on the floor of the House of Com-  
 "mons. I have never in America or anywhere  
 "else, advocated the separation of Ireland from  
 "Great Britain."

How far this is true, the quotations from his  
 speeches which have already been given, will have

shown. But the Government have kept up the farce; Mr. Winston Churchill said during the debate on the Bill of 1912:—

“The Home Rule movement has never been a separatist movement. In the whole course of its career it has been a moderating, modifying movement, designed to secure the recognition of Irish claims within the circuit of the British Empire.”

But not even the immediate prospect of Home Rule can be said to have made those parts of Ireland where the League is supreme a happy place of residence to any but advanced Nationalists. The following report of a case in the Magistrate's Court at Ennis in November 1912 will speak for the condition of the County Clare:—

Patrick Arkins was charged with knocking down walls on the farm of Mrs. Fitzpatrick in order to compel her to give up the farm. Inspector Davis gave evidence that from January 1910 to that date there were 104 serious outrages in his district. In 42 firearms were used, 27 were malicious injuries, 32 were threatening notices, 1 case of bomb explosion outside a house, 1 robbery of arms, and 1 attempted robbery. A sum of £268 had been awarded as compensation for malicious injury and there were claims for £75 pending for malicious injuries committed during the week ended 11th inst. There were two persons under constant police protection, and 16 receiving protection by patrol. Head Con-

stable Mulligan said that Mrs. Fitzpatrick was under police protection. Since February 11th, 1912, there had been 12 outrages in the district, Mrs. Fitzpatrick was under almost constant police protection. Acting Sergeant Beegan deposed that there had been 12 outrages on the Fitzpatrick family during the last four years; these included driving cattle off the lands, threatening notices, firing shots at the house, knocking down walls, spiking meadows; the new roof of a hay barn was perforated with bullets, and at Kiltonaghty Chapel there were notices threatening death to anyone who would work for Mrs. Fitzpatrick. Timothy Fitzpatrick gave similar evidence as to the outrages, and said that his father had taken the farm twenty-one years ago, and had paid the son of the former tenant £40 for his goodwill.

(I may add that Arkins was committed for trial, convicted at the Assizes and sentenced to seven years penal servitude; and was released by Mr. Birrell a few weeks afterwards.)

In another Clare case, in February of the present year, the resident Magistrate said as follows:—

“ It is a mistake to say that these outrages are  
“ arising out of disputes between landlord and  
“ tenant; nine out of ten arise out of petty dis-  
“ putes about land. What is the use of having  
“ new land laws? A case occurred not long ago  
“ in this county of a man who had bought some  
“ land twenty years ago, and paid down hard

“cash to the outgoing tenant. The man died,  
“and left a widow and children on the land for  
“fourteen years. But in 1908 a man who had  
“some ulterior object got the man who had sold  
“the farm to send in a claim under the Evicted  
“Tenant’s Act, which was rejected. That was  
“what the advisers of the man wanted—they only  
“wanted a pretext for moonlighting and other  
“disgraceful outrages, and the woman was kept  
“in a hell for four years. A man was caught at  
“last and convicted, and one would think that  
“this was a subject for rejoicing for all right-  
“minded men in the county. But what was the  
“result? A perfect tornado of letters was  
“printed, and resolutions and speeches appeared  
“in the public press, condemning this conviction  
“of a moonlighter in Clare as an outrage against  
“justice.”

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Killaloe, in a sermon preached in December 1912, referring to County Clare said :—

“That county had had an evil record in the  
“matter of crime, and they were so accustomed  
“to outrages of almost weekly occurrence around  
“them that it was not easy to shock them. There  
“was an inoffensive family sitting round the  
“fireside with a couple of neighbours. They had  
“given no offence, they had wronged no man,  
“they had crossed no man’s path. But that  
“inhuman beast went to the door and lifted the  
“latch, and there, at a few yards distance, fired

“into that innocent group of men, women and  
 “children, as if they were a flock of crows, killing  
 “the mother outright and almost blowing the  
 “forehead off a young girl. There was no deny-  
 “ing the fact that that brutal murder was the  
 “natural outcome of the disgraceful system of  
 “intimidation and outrage that had been rampant  
 “for a long time in certain districts of that  
 “unhappy county and of the immunity from  
 “punishment enjoyed by the wicked and  
 “cowardly moonlighter. In addition to their  
 “other acts of savagery, they had shot out the  
 “eyes of two men within the last couple of years.  
 “A decent, honest man was shot on the road to  
 “Ennis. The people passed the wounded man  
 “by and refused to take him into their car  
 “through fear. Not one of these well-known  
 “miscreants was brought to justice. The mur-  
 “derers of poor Garvey, the cow-houghers, the  
 “hay-burners, were said to be known. In any  
 “other country, for instance in the United States,  
 “such ruffianism would be hunted down or  
 “lynched; but there, in the places he referred to,  
 “they had a curtain of security drawn round them  
 “by the cowardice or perverted moral sense on  
 “the part of the community amongst whom they  
 “lived . . . . It was only last Thursday night,  
 “before the county had recovered from the shock  
 “of Mrs. O’Mara’s murder, that right over the  
 “mountain an unfortunate postman was shot on  
 “the public road between Crusheen and Balilu-  
 “ran, for no other reason apparently than that

“another fellow wanted his job of one and six-  
“pence a day ! It has come to this, that if you  
“differ with one of them for a shilling, or refuse  
“to give him his way in everything the first thing  
“that comes into his head is to moonlight you  
“ . . . . They have not elevation or social  
“instinct to settle their petty disputes by process  
“of law provided for the purpose by a civilized  
“society, nor have they Christianity enough to  
“bear a little wrong or disappointment for  
“Christ’s sake. No, nor the manliness even to  
“meet an opponent face to face and see it out with  
“him like a man ; but with the cunning of a mean  
“and vicious dog, he steals behind him in the  
“dark and shoots him in the back, or murders  
“the helpless woman of his family, or shoots out  
“the eyes of the poor man’s horse, or cuts the  
“throat of his bullock and spikes his beast upon  
“a gate.”

Nor has the present year brought much improvement. In May 1913, Mr. R. Maunsell was fired at and wounded close to the town of Ennis. His crime was that he managed a farm for a Mr. Bannatyne, whose family had been in possession of it for about sixty years, but who had recently been denounced by the United Irish League and ordered to surrender it. As he has refused to do so, he is now compelled to live under police protection.

The abolition of landlordism and the acquisition of firearms can hardly be said to have brought peace and tranquillity to the County of Clare.

And as to Galway, we may gather the state of affairs from the report of a case tried at the Winter Assizes of 1912. Three men were charged with having done grievous bodily harm to a man named Conolly. Conolly swore that he knew a man named Broderick who had become unpopular but he (Conolly) kept to him and this brought displeasure on him from the accused and others. On the night of the 11th September he went to bed; he was subsequently awakened and found 44 grains of shot in his left knee and four in his right. He then lay flat on the floor. Other shots were fired through the window but did not strike him. The judge said the district was a disgrace to Ireland. Day after day, night after night, heaps of outrages were committed there, and not one offender was made amenable to justice. The jury disagreed, and the accused were again put on their trial. The judge in charging the jury on the second trial said that then, and for some time, the district was swarming with police, and though outrages were frequent, it was impossible for them to bring anyone to justice. No one was sure he might not be fired at during the night; and people were afraid to give evidence. The jury again disagreed.

During the autumn of 1912 an effort was made to hold a series of meetings throughout the south and west of Ireland to protest against Home Rule. The conduct of the Nationalists with regard to them supplies a striking commentary on Mr. Redmond's statement at Banbury not long before, that all through his political life he had preached concilia-



tion towards those who differed from him on the question of Home Rule. The meetings were in some cases stopped by force; at Limerick the windows of the Protestant Church and of some houses occupied by Protestants were smashed; at Tralee the principal speaker was a large farmer named Crosbie; all his hay and sheds were burned down, and he was awarded £600 compensation by the County Court Judge.

But an incident had occurred in the north which, though in a sense comparatively slight, has, in consequence of the circumstances connected with it, done more to inflame the men of Ulster than persons not living in Ireland can realise. In June of last year a party of Sunday School children from a suburb of Belfast went for a picnic to Castle-dawson (co. Derry) under the charge of a Presbyterian minister and a few teachers and ladies. On their way back to the railway station, they were met and assailed by a procession of men belonging to the Order of Hibernians armed with pikes who attacked the children with the pikes and with stones, seized a Union Jack which a small boy was carrying, and knocked down and kicked some of the girls and teachers. Worse might have happened had not some Protestant young men, seeing what was going on, come to the rescue. The minister was struck with stones whilst he was endeavouring to get some of the children to a place of safety. No Nationalist has ever expressed the slightest regret at the occurrence. Several of the aggressors were tried at the Winter Assizes and sentenced to

three months' imprisonment. Before the end of the term they were released by order of the Government. Mr. Birrell, in justifying his action, said that the judge had remarked that there was no evidence before him of actual injury. This, like many of his statements, was literally true; but he omitted to mention that he had prevented the evidence from being given; the injured women and children were quite ready to give their testimony, but were not called by the counsel for the crown.

It is unnecessary to say that this foretaste of Home Rule government has made the Presbyterians of Ulster more determined than ever to resist it to the bitter end.

I shall next proceed to consider the Bill which the Government have introduced as a panacea for the woes of Ireland.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CRITICISM OF THE BILL NOW BEFORE THE COUNTRY.

THAT the maintenance of the Union is possible, and that complete separation is possible, are two indisputable facts. But the question is, was Wolfe Tone right when he said that these were the only two possibilities; or is there a third one, and if so, what?

Residents in the Dominions will naturally be inclined to reply "Yes; place Ireland in the position of a colony possessing responsible government, such as New Zealand." It is a taking idea; but a little reflection will show the falseness of the analogy. The relations between the Mother Country and the self-governing colonies (now often called "Dominions") have grown up of themselves; and, like most political conditions which have so come about, are theoretically illogical but practically convenient. The practical convenience arises partly from the friendly spirit which animates both parties, but still more from the nature of the case. The distance which separates the Mother Country from the Dominions causes the anomalies to be scarcely perceptible. In theory the Sovereign, acting on the advice of British Ministers, can disallow any colonial statute, and the British Parliament is supreme—it can pass laws that will bind the colonies, even laws imposing taxes. But we all know that if the Home Government were persis-

tently to veto laws passed by the large majority of the people in New Zealand, or the British Parliament were to attempt to legislate for the colonies, relations would at once become strained, and separation would be inevitable. The only important matters on which the Home Government attempts to bind the colonies are those relating to foreign countries (which are necessarily of an Imperial nature) and those as to which the colonies themselves wish to have an Act passed, such as the Act establishing Australian Federation. In other words, the "supremacy of Parliament," which is a stern reality in England, has very little meaning as regards New Zealand. Even if the people of New Zealand were to manage the affairs of their country in a manner contrary to English ideas—for instance if they were to establish State lotteries and public gambling tables—England would be but slightly affected, and certainly would never think of taking steps to prevent them. And those matters in which the Home Government is obliged to act are just those in which New Zealand has no desire to interfere; for instance, New Zealand would never want to appoint consuls of her own (which was the immediate cause of the separation between Norway and Sweden); in the very few cases in which New Zealand desires to make use of political or commercial agents abroad, she is content to employ the British representatives, for whom she is not called upon to pay. If New Zealand attempted to take part in a European war in which England was not concerned—the idea is almost too absurd to sug-

gest—the only thing that England could do would be to break off the connection and repudiate New Zealand altogether. And if New Zealand desired to separate from the Mother Country, many people would think it a most grievous mistake, but England certainly would not seek to prevent her doing so by force; and though England would in some ways be the worse for it, the government of England and of the rest of the Empire would go on much the same as before. In certain points, it is true, thoughtful men have generally come to the conclusion that the present state of affairs cannot go on unchanged; the time is coming when the great Dominions must provide for their own defence by sea as well as by land; and whether this is to be done by separate navies working together or by joint contributions to a common navy, it will probably result in the formation of some Imperial Council in which all parts will have a voice. That however, is a matter for future discussion and arrangement.

But when we turn to Ireland, everything is different. The two islands are separated by less than fifty miles. Ireland has for more than a century been adequately represented in the Imperial Parliament; the journey from Galway to London is shorter than that from Auckland or Dunedin to Wellington. So long as Europe remains as it is, Great Britain and Ireland must have a common system of defence—which means one army, one navy, and one plan of fortifications. Again, Irishmen, traders and others, will constantly have to

make use of government agents in other countries. Now unless Great Britain is to arrange and pay for the whole of this, we are met at once by the insoluble problem of Irish representation in the British Parliament. If Ireland is not represented there, we are faced with the old difficulty of taxation without representation; if Ireland is represented there for all purposes, Ireland can interfere in the local affairs of England, but England cannot in those of Ireland; if we have what has been called the "in-and-out" scheme as proposed by Gladstone in 1893—that is, for the Irish members to vote on all questions of an Imperial nature, but to retire when matters affecting England only are under discussion—then, even if the line could be drawn (which is doubtful) we might have the absurdity of an English ministry which possessed the confidence of the majority of Englishmen and whose management of England met their approval, being turned out of office by the Irish vote, and England being governed according to a policy which the majority of Englishmen detested. Of course it may be said that there ought to be a number of small Parliaments in the British Isles, like those in the Provinces of Canada or the States of Australia, with one great Parliament supreme over them—in other words, Federation. That might be a good thing, although it would in its turn start many difficulties which it is unnecessary now to discuss, for it is not Home Rule nor does Home Rule lead to it. Federal systems arise by the union of separate States, each State giving up a part of its power to



a joint body which can levy taxes and can overrule the local authorities. In fact, when Federation comes about, the States cease to be nations.

(I must here remark in passing that constant confusion has been caused by the various senses in which the word "nation" is used. Thus it is often quite correctly employed in a sentimental sense—we speak of Scottish National character, or of the National Bible Society of Scotland, though Scotland has no separate Parliament or flag and would on a map of Europe be painted the same colour as the rest of Great Britain. Quite distinct from that is the political sense, in which the Irish Nationalists use the word when speaking of being "A Nation once again," or of "The National Independence of Ireland.")

It might be possible for the United Kingdom to be broken up into a Federation (though it is strange that there is no precedent in history for such a course); but that would not be "satisfying the National Aspirations of Ireland." In fact, as Mr. Childers, one of the ablest of English advocates of Home Rule, has stated: "The term Federal, as applied to Irish Home Rule at the present time, is meaningless."

But when we come to examine the existing Bill, which will become law in 1914 unless something unforeseen occurs, we find that it is neither the Colonial plan nor Federation but an elaborate system which really seems as if it had been devised with the object of satisfying nobody and producing friction at every point. England (by which of



course I mean Great Britain; I merely use the shorter term for convenience) is not only to pay the total cost of the army, navy and diplomatic services, including the defences of Ireland, but is also to grant an annual subsidy to Ireland commencing with £500,000 but subsequently reduced to £200,000. Whether the English taxpayer will relish this when he comes to realise it, may be doubted. Certainly no precedent can be cited for a Federal system under which all the common expenditure is borne by one of the parties. And further, the present Government state freely that they hope to carry out their policy by introducing a Bill for Home Rule for Scotland and possibly also for Wales. Will the Scotch and Welsh consent to contribute towards the government of Ireland; or will they demand that they shall be treated like Ireland, and leave the people of England to pay all Imperial services and to subsidize Ireland, Scotland and Wales? Then again, Ireland is to send forty-two representatives to what is still sarcastically to be called the "Parliament of the United Kingdom," but will no doubt popularly be known as the English Parliament. They are to vote about the taxation of people in Great Britain, and to interfere in local affairs of that country, whilst the people of Great Britain are not to tax Ireland or interfere in any way with its affairs. This is indeed representation without taxation. Of course it is inevitable that the Irish members will continue to do what they are doing at present—that is, offer their votes to whatever party will

promise further concessions to Irish Nationalism; and they will probably find no more difficulty in getting an English party to consent to such an immoral bargain than they do now.

The provisions as to legislation for Ireland are still more extraordinary. The Irish Parliament is to have complete power of legislating as to Irish affairs, with the exception of certain matters enumerated in the Act; thus it may repeal any Acts of the Imperial Parliament passed before 1914. On the other hand, the English Parliament (in which Ireland will have only forty-two representatives) will also be able to pass laws binding Ireland (and in this way to re-enact the laws which the Irish Parliament has just repealed), and these new laws the Irish Parliament may not repeal or overrule. Now this power of the English Parliament will either be a reality or a farce; if it is a reality, the Irish Nationalists will be no more inclined to submit to laws made by "an alien Parliament" in which they have only forty-two representatives than they are at present to submit to those made by one in which they have 103; if it is a farce, the "supremacy of the Imperial Parliament" is a misleading expression. The Lord Lieutenant is to act as to some matters on the advice of the Irish Ministry, as to others on the advice of the English. Anyone who has studied the history of constitutional government in the colonies in the early days, when the governor was still supposed to act as to certain affairs independently of ministerial advice, will see the confusion to which this must lead. Suppose

the Lord Lieutenant acts on the advice of the English ministers in a way of which the Irish Parliament do not approve, and the Irish Ministry resign in consequence, what can result but a deadlock?

But most extraordinary of all are the provisions as to finance. The Government appointed a Committee of Experts to consider this question. The committee made their report; but the Government rejected their advice and substituted another plan which is so elaborate that it is only possible to touch on some of its more important features here. I have already said that the English Parliament will have no power to tax Ireland. That statement, however, must be taken subject to two reservations. The Bill provides that if ever the happy day arrives when for three consecutive years the revenue of Ireland has exceeded the cost of government, the English Parliament (with the addition of twenty-three extra members summoned from Ireland for the purpose) may make new provisions securing from Ireland a contribution towards Imperial expenditure. As this is the only reference to the subject in the Bill, the general opinion was that until those improbable circumstances should occur, the English Parliament would have no power to tax Ireland; but when the debates were drawing to a close, the Government astonished the House by stating that according to their construction of the Bill, should any new emergency arise at any time after the Bill becomes law (for instance, a great naval emergency requiring an addition to the

Income Tax) it would be not merely the right but also the duty of the Imperial Chancellor of the Exchequer to see that the charge should be borne by the whole United Kingdom—in other words, the Parliament in which Ireland possesses only forty-two representatives may and ought to tax Ireland for Imperial purposes. The friction which will arise should any attempt of the sort be made, especially as the power is not stated in the Bill, is evident. In plain words, it will be impossible to levy the tax.

But apart from these rights, which one may safely say will never be exercised, the financial arrangements will from their very complexity be a constant source of trouble. All taxes levied in Ireland are to be paid into the English Exchequer (or as it is called in the Bill “The Exchequer of the United Kingdom”). Some of the objects for which these taxes have been levied are to be managed by the Irish Government—these are called “Irish services”; others are to be managed by the English Government—these are called “Reserved services.” The English Exchequer will then hand over to the Irish Exchequer:—

- (a) A sum representing the net cost to the Exchequer of the United Kingdom of “Irish Services” at the time of the passing of the Act;
- (b) The sum of £500,000 a year, reducible to £200,000, above referred to; and
- (c) A sum equal to the proceeds of any new taxes levied by the Irish Parliament.

Then the balance which the English Exchequer will retain, after handing over these three sums, will go to the “Reserved Services.” But as, in consequence of the establishment of the Old Age Pensions and some other similar liabilities, the aggregate cost of governing Ireland at this moment exceeds the revenue derived from Ireland by about £1,500,000, the English taxpayer will have to make up this sum, as well as to give to Ireland an annual present of £500,000; and even if the Irish Government succeeds in managing its affairs more economically than the Government at present does, that will give no relief to the British taxpayer, for it will be observed that the first of the three sums which the Exchequer of the United Kingdom is to hand over is not a sum representing the cost of the “Irish Services” at any future date but the cost at the time of the passing of the Act.

It is possible of course that the Irish revenue derived from existing taxes may increase, and so the burden on the English taxpayer may be lightened; but as it is more probable that it will decrease, and consequently the burden become heavier, the English taxpayer cannot derive much consolation from that.

It will be seen from the foregoing remarks that a number of extremely intricate and difficult financial questions must arise; for instance, what sum really represents the net cost of “Irish Services” at the time of the passing of the Act; what sum equals the net proceeds of new taxes imposed by the Irish Parliament; and at what

moment it can be said that the revenue of Ireland has for three consecutive years exceeded the cost of government. All such matters are to be decided by a Board of Five, of whom one is to be nominated by the King (presumably on the advice of the English Ministers), two by the English Government, and two by the Irish. From the decisions of this Board on matters of fact there is to be no appeal. It is needless to point out that every detail in which the three English members overrule the two Irish will be fought out again in the English Parliament by the forty Irish members. This again will show how vain is the hope that future English Parliaments will be relieved from endless discussions as to Irish affairs. Professor Dicey has well named the able work in which he has analysed the Bill and shown its impossibilities "A Fool's Paradise."

The provisions concerning those matters as to which the Irish Parliament is to have no power to legislate are as strange as the other clauses of the Bill. For six years the Constabulary are to be a "reserved service"; but as they will be under the orders of the Irish Government, the object of this is hard to see—unless indeed it is to create an impression that the Ulstermen if they refuse to obey them are rebelling not against the Irish but the Imperial Government. The Post Office Savings Banks are "reserved" for a longer period; as to the postal services to places beyond Ireland, the Irish Parliament will have no power to legislate; but the Post Office, so far as it relates to Ireland



alone, will be handed over at once to the Irish Parliament—although even in the case of Federal Unions such as Australia the Post Office is usually considered to be eminently a matter for the Federal authority. And the question whether an Irish Act is unconstitutional and therefore void will be decided by the Privy Council, which will be regarded as an essentially English body; hence if it attempts to veto an Irish Act, its action will be at once denounced as a revival of Poyning's Act and the Declaratory Act of George I.

The Bill excludes the relations with Foreign States from the powers of the Irish Parliament, but says nothing to prevent the Irish Government from appointing a political agent to the Vatican. That is probably one of the first things that it will do; and as the Lord Lieutenant could never form a Government which would consent to any other course, he will be obliged to consent. This agent, not being responsible to the British Foreign Office, may cause constant friction between England and Italy.

But quite apart from the unworkable provisions of the Bill, everything connected with its introduction and passing through Parliament has tended to increase the hatred which the Opposition feel towards it, and the determination of the Ulstermen to resist it if necessary even by force. Those who lived in Australia whilst Federation was under discussion will recollect how carefully the scheme was brought before the people, discussed in various Colonial Parliaments, considered over again line by



line by the delegates in an Inter-Colonial Conference, examined afresh in the Colonial Office in London and in the Imperial Parliament and finally laid before each colony for its acceptance. Yet here is a matter which vitally affects the government not of Ireland only but of the whole United Kingdom, and thus indirectly of the Empire at large; it was (as I have shown) not fairly brought before the people at a general election; it has been introduced by what is admittedly merely a coalition Government as a matter of bargain between the various sections, at a time when the British Constitution is in a state of dislocation, as the power of the House of Lords has been destroyed and the new Upper Chamber not yet set up; and it has been passed without adequate discussion. This I say deliberately; it is no use to point out how many hours have been spent in Committee, for the way in which the discussion has been conducted has deprived it of any real value. The custom has been for the Government to state beforehand the time at which each batch of clauses is to be passed, and what amendments may be discussed (the rest being passed over in silence); when the discussion is supposed to begin, their supporters ostentatiously walk out, and the Opposition argue to empty benches; then when the moment for closing the discussion arrives, the Minister in charge gets up and says that the Government cannot accept any of the amendments proposed; the bell rings, the Government supporters troop back, and pass all the clauses unamended. As an instance of this

contemptible way of conducting the debate, it is sufficient to point to the fact already mentioned, that so vital a matter as the power of the English Parliament to tax Ireland was not even hinted at until nearly the end of the debates.

And now the Bill is to become law without any further appeal to the people.

Are English Unionists to be blamed if they declare that an Act so passed will possess no moral obligation, and that they are determined, should the terrible necessity arise, to aid the Ulstermen in resisting it to the uttermost?

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE DANGER TO THE EMPIRE OF ANY FORM OF HOME RULE. THE QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

IN the last chapter I explained how hopelessly unworkable is the particular scheme of Home Rule which is contained in the present Bill. I now proceed to show why Home Rule in any form must lead to disaster—primarily to Ireland, ultimately to the Empire.

Politicians who, like ostriches, possess the happy faculty of shutting their eyes to unpleasant facts, may say that there is only one nation in Ireland; but everyone who knows the country is quite aware that there are two, which may be held together as part of the United Kingdom, but which can no more be forced into one nation than Belgium and Holland could be forced to combine as the Kingdom of the Netherlands. And whatever cross-currents there may be, the great line of cleavage is religion. Of course I am aware of the violent efforts that have been made ever since the commencement of the Nationalist agitation to prove that this is not so. Thus Parnell, addressing an English audience, explained that religion had nothing to do with the movement, and as evidence stated that he was the leader of it though not merely a Protestant but a member of the Protestant Synod and a parochial nominator for his own parish. Of course everyone in Ireland knew perfectly well that he was only a Protestant in the sense that Garibaldi

was a Roman Catholic—he had been baptised as such in infancy; and that he was not a member of the synod or a parochial nominator, and never had been one; but the statement was good enough to deceive his Nonconformist hearers. That Protestant Home Rulers exist is not denied. But the numbers are so small that it is evident that they are the rare exceptions that prove the rule. The very anxiety with which, when a Protestant Home Ruler can be discovered he is put forward, and the fact of his being a Protestant Home Ruler referred to again and again, shows what a rare bird he is. To mention one instance amongst many; a Protestant Home Ruler has recently been speaking on platforms in England explaining that he came in a representative capacity in order to testify to the people of England that the Irish Protestants were now in favour of Home Rule. He did not mention the fact that in the district where he resided there were about 1,000 Protestants and he was the only Home Ruler amongst them—in fact, nearly all the rest had signed a Petition against the Bill. And when we come to examine who these Protestant Home Rulers are, about whom so much has been said, we find first that there is in this as in every other movement, a very small number of faddists, who like to go against their own party; secondly a few who though they still call themselves Protestants have to all intents and purposes abandoned their religion, and therefore cannot fairly be reckoned; thirdly, a few who hold appointments from which they would be dismissed if they did not

conform; fourthly, some who say openly that Home Rule is coming and that whatever their private opinions may be it is the wisest policy to worship the rising sun (bearing in mind that Mr. Dillon has promised that when the Nationalists attain their end they will remember who were their friends and who their enemies, and deal out rewards and punishments accordingly); and fifthly, those who have accepted what future historians will describe as bribes. For the present Government have showered down Peerages, Knighthoods of various orders, Lieutenancies of Counties, Deputy-Lieutenancies and Commissions of the Peace—not to speak of salaried offices both in Ireland and elsewhere—on Protestants who would consent to turn Nationalists, in a manner which makes it absurd to talk any more about bribery at the time of the Union. And yet with all this the Protestant Home Rulers are such an extremely small body that they may be disregarded. And indeed it is hard to see how an earnest, consistent and logically-minded Protestant can be a Nationalist; for loyalty to the King is a part of his creed; and, in the words of a Nationalist organ, the *Midland Tribune*, “If a man be a Nationalist he must *ipso facto* be a Disloyalist, for Irish Nationalism and loyalty to the throne of England could not be synonymous.”

On the other hand, a large proportion of the educated Roman Catholics, the men who have a real stake in the country, are Unionists. Some of them, however earnest they may be in their religion, dread the domination of a political priesthood;

others dread still more the union of the Church with anarchism. As has already been shown, they refuse to join the United Irish League; some in the north have actually subscribed the Ulster Covenant; many others have signed petitions against Home Rule throughout the country; and a still larger number have stated that they would gladly do so if they did not fear the consequences. It is probably therefore correct to say that the number of Unionists in Ireland decidedly exceeds the number of Protestants; in other words, less than three-fourths of the population are Nationalists, and more than one-fourth (perhaps about one-third) are Unionists. And more than that; if we are to test the reality of a movement, we must look not merely at numbers but at other matters. Violent language may be used; but the fact remains as I have previously stated that even if the Nationalists are taken as being only two-thirds of the population, their annual subscriptions to the cause do not amount to anything like a penny per head and that the agitation could not last for six months if it were not kept alive by contributions from America and the Colonies. But though the Nationalist movement has not brought about a Union between the Orange and the Green, it has caused two other Unions to be formed which will have an important influence on the future history of the country. In the first place it has revived, or cemented, the Union which, as we have seen, existed at former periods of Irish history, but which has existed in no other country in the world—the

Union between the Black and the Red. That a Union between two forces so essentially antagonistic as Ultramontaniam and Jacobinism will be permanent, one can hardly suppose; whether the clericals, if they succeed in crushing the heretics, will afterwards be able to turn and crush the anarchists with whom they have been in alliance, and then reign supreme; or whether, as happened in France at the end of the eighteenth century and in Portugal recently, the anarchists who have grown up within the bosom of the Church will prove to be a more deadly foe to the clericals than the heretics ever were—it is impossible to say; but neither prospect seems very cheerful.

In the second place, the Nationalist movement has drawn all the Protestant bodies together as nothing else could. Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Methodists have all joined hands in the defence of their common liberties. The Nationalists have left no stone unturned in their efforts to prove that the northern Protestants are disloyal. They have succeeded in finding one speech that was made by an excited orator (not a leader) forty-four years ago, to the effect that the Disestablishment of the Church might result in the Queen's Crown being kicked into the Boyne. As this is the only instance they can rake up, it has been quoted in the House of Commons and elsewhere again and again; and Mr. Birrell (whose knowledge of Ireland seems to be entirely derived from Nationalist speeches) has recently elaborated it by saying that when the Church was going to be disestablished "they used



to declare" that the Queen's Crown would be kicked into the Boyne, and yet their threats came to nothing and therefore the result of Home Rule will be the same. The fact was that the Church establishment was the last relic of Protestant Ascendancy; and as I have already shown, that meant Anglican ascendancy in which Presbyterianism did not participate; hence, when the agitation for Disestablishment arose, though some few Presbyterians greatly disliked it, their opposition as a whole was lukewarm. But when in 1886 Home Rule became a question of practical politics, they rose up against it as one man; in 1893, when the second Home Rule Bill was introduced and actually passed the House of Commons, they commenced organising their Volunteer army to resist it, if necessary, by force of arms; and they are just as keen to-day as they were twenty years ago. They are certainly not disloyal; the republican spirit which permeated their ancestors in the eighteenth century has long since died out completely. Sir Walter Scott said that if he had lived at the time of the Union between Scotland and England, he would have fought against it; but, living a century later and seeing the benefit that it had been to his country, his feelings were all on the other side. That is what the Presbyterians of Ulster say to-day. They point to the way in which Ulster has, under the Union, been able to develop itself; with no richer soil, no better climate, and no greater natural advantages than other parts of Ireland, the energy, ability, and true patriotism of the people have

enabled them to establish and encourage commerce and manufactures which have brought wealth and prosperity to Ulster whilst the other Provinces have been stationary or retrograde. There cannot be a better instance of the different spirit which animates the two communities than the history of the linen industry. Michael Davitt bitterly described it as "Not an Irish, but an Orange industry." And from his point of view, he was quite right; for it is practically confined to Ulster. In that Province it has during the nineteenth century developed so steadily that the annual export now exceeds £15,000,000 in value and more than 70,000 hands are employed in the mills. Not long ago, a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire whether it was not possible to grow flax in the south and west, and if so why it was not done. The Commission made careful enquiries, and reported that in both Munster and Connaught efforts had been made to establish the industry (notably by the late Lord Bandon, one of the much-abused landlord class, who had let land for the purpose at a nominal charge, obtained seed and brought experts from the north to instruct the people); that it had been proved that both soil and climate were quite as well adapted for it as in Ulster; but that after a few years the buyers refused any longer to purchase the flax as it was so carelessly and badly prepared that it was valueless; and so the industry had died out. In both south and west the people expressed their readiness to revive it if a large grant were made to them by the Government, but not otherwise.

Then again we may take the growth of the cities. It seems hard now to realise that one reason why the people of Dublin opposed the Union was because they feared lest, when their city ceased to be the capital, Cork might grow into a great industrial centre and surpass it. Cork has remained stationary ever since; Belfast, then an insignificant country town, has become a city of 400,000 inhabitants, and the customs from it alone are more than double those from all the rest of Ireland put together. And what is true of Belfast is true also on a smaller scale of all the other towns north of the Boyne.

This remarkable contrast between the progress of the north-east and the stagnation of the rest of the country is no new thing. It has been observed ever since the Union. So long ago as 1832 the Report of the Commission on the linen manufacture of Ireland contained the following words:—

“Political and religious animosities and dissensions, and increasing agitation first for one object and then for another have so destroyed confidence and shaken the bonds of society—undermined men’s principles and estranged neighbour from neighbour, friend from friend, and class from class—that, in lieu of observing any common effort to ameliorate the condition of the people, we find every proposition for this object, emanate from which party it may, received with distrust by the other; maligned, perverted and destroyed, to gratify the political

“purposes of a faction . . . . The comparative  
“prosperity enjoyed by that portion of Ireland  
“where tranquillity ordinarily prevails, such as  
“the Counties Down, Antrim, and Derry, testify  
“the capabilities of Ireland to work out her own  
“regeneration, when freed of the disturbing  
“causes which have so long impeded her progress  
“in civilization and improvement. We find  
“there a population hardy, healthy and em-  
“ployed; capital fast flowing into the district;  
“new sources of employment daily developing  
“themselves; a people well disposed alike to the  
“government and institutions of their country;  
“and not distrustful and jealous of their supe-  
“riors. Contrast the social condition of these  
“people with such pictures as we have presented  
“to us from other districts.”

This energetic, self-reliant and prosperous community now see before their eyes what the practical working of government by the League is. They see it generally in the condition of the country, and especially in the Dublin Convention of 1909, the narrow-minded administration of the Local Government Act wherever the power of the League prevails, and the insecurity for life and property in the west; they know also that a Home Rule Government must mean increased taxation (as the Nationalists themselves confess) which will probably—in fact, one may almost say must certainly, as no other source is available—be thrown on the Ulster manufactures; is it not therefore a matter of life and death to them to resist it to the uttermost?

But as I have said, the great line of cleavage is religion. Here I know that I shall be accused of "Orange bigotry." But I am not afraid of the charge; first because I do not happen to be an Orangeman; and secondly because I regard bigotry as the outcome of ignorance and prejudice, and consider therefore that a calm examination of the evidence is the very antithesis of bigotry. In order to make this examination I desire in the first place to avoid the mistake that Grattan made in judging the probabilities of the future from the opinions of personal friends whom I like and respect, but who, as I know (and regret to think), possess no influence whatever. I consider that there are other data—such as works of authority, the action of the public bodies, statements by men in prominent positions, and articles in leading journals—from which it is safer to form an estimate. The Ulstermen are content that the country should be governed, as far as religion is concerned, on modern principles—that is to say, in much the same way that England, Australia and New Zealand are governed to-day. The Nationalists, whatever they may say in England or the Colonies, have never in Ireland from the commencement of the movement attempted to deny that their object is to see Ireland governed on principles which are totally different and which the Ulstermen detest. As long ago as 1886, the *Freeman's Journal*, the leading Nationalist organ, said :—

"We contend that the good government of  
 "Ireland by England is impossible . . . . the

“one people has not only accepted but retained  
“with inviolable constancy the Christian faith;  
“the other has not only rejected it, but has been  
“for three centuries the leader of the great  
“apostasy, and is at this day the principal  
“obstacle to the conversion of the world.”

And as recently as December 1912, Professor Nolan of Maynooth, addressing the Roman Catholic students at the Belfast University, said :—

“Humanly speaking, we are on the eve of  
“Home Rule. We shall have a free hand in the  
“future. Let us use it well. This is a Catholic  
“country, and if we do not govern it on Catholic  
“lines, according to Catholic ideals, and to safe-  
“guard Catholic interests, it will be all the worse  
“for the country and all the worse for us. We  
“have now a momentous opportunity of chang-  
“ing the whole course of Irish history.”

Then another of their papers, the *Rosary*, has said : “We have played the game of tolerance until the game is played out”; and has prophesied that under Home Rule the Church will become an irresistible engine before whom all opposition must go down. And whatever the educated laity may desire, no one who knows Ireland can doubt that it is the clerical faction that will be all-powerful. The leading ecclesiastics are trained at the Gregorian University at Rome; and one of the Professors at that institution, in a work published in 1901 with the special approval of Pope Leo XIII, enunciated the doctrine that it is the duty of a Christian State

to put to death heretics who have been condemned by the Ecclesiastical Court. Of course no one supposes that such a thing will ever take place in Ireland; but what the Ulstermen object to is putting themselves under the rule of men who have been trained in such principles and believe them to be approved by an infallible authority.

In 1904 some foreign merchants at Barcelona wished to build a church for themselves. Republican feeling is so strong in the municipality that permission was obtained without difficulty. But the bishop at once protested and appealed to the King. The King wrote back a sympathetic letter expressing his deep regret that he was unable to prevent this fresh attack on the Catholic faith.

We are constantly being told that the tolerance and liberality shown by the majority in Quebec is sufficient of itself to prove how foolish are the apprehensions felt by the minority in Ireland. Well, I will quote from a journal which cannot be accused of Protestant bias, the *Irish Independent*, one of the leading organs of the Nationalist-clerical party in Ireland:—

“(From our own Correspondent.)

“Montreal, Thursday.

“In connection with the celebration of the  
“anniversary of Wolfe’s victory and death, which  
“takes place in September, prominent members  
“of the Anglican Church have inaugurated a  
“movement for the erection of a Wolfe Memorial  
“Chapel on the Plains of Abraham. The



“organisers of the movement hope ultimately to  
“secure the transfer of the General’s remains to  
“the chapel for interment on the scene of his  
“victory.

“The population being largely French-  
“Canadian Catholics, the Catholic Church organ  
“of Quebec strongly protests against the erection  
“of an Anglican chapel in the heart of a Catholic  
“district.”

Now if this conduct on the part of the Roman Catholic authorities is quite right at Barcelona and Quebec, why is it “Orange bigotry” to suggest that the same people may act in the same way at Cork or Galway?

Again, in 1910, a remarkable volume was published, written by Mrs. Hugh Fraser, the sister of the novelist, Marion Crawford, entitled “A Diplomat’s Wife in Many Lands.” The authoress was a very able woman, who had travelled much and mixed in cultured society wherever she had been; her book was highly reviewed by various English Magazines. She tells the story of a child of Jewish parents living at Rome in the days of Pope Pius IX, who was secretly baptized in infancy by a nurse, and at the age of seven was forcibly taken from his parents and placed in a Convent School. She explains that not only was this quite right, but that such a course is inevitable in every country in which the Church has power; and that the feelings of the heretic mother whose child is taken from her are a fair subject of ridicule on the part of good

Catholics. Can Irish Protestants be accused of bigotry when they contend that these writers mean what they say? English Nonconformists argue that they ought to wait until the time comes and then either fight or leave the country; but the Irish Protestants reply that it is more sensible to take steps beforehand to ward off the danger. And whether they are right or wrong, the fact remains that those are their ideas, and that is their determination; and this is the situation which must be faced if Home Rule is forced upon the people of Ulster.

By a striking coincidence, two meetings have recently been held on the same day—the 16th of May 1913—which form an apt illustration of the position adopted by the two parties. The first was a great demonstration of Unionists at Belfast, organised in order to make a further protest against the Bill and to perfect the organisation for opposing it by force, if the necessity arises; the second was a large meeting of the United Irish League at Mullingar. The Chairman, Mr. Ginnell, M.P. (who has gained prominence and popularity by his skill in arranging cattle-drives), said that the chief cause of the pressure last session was to get the Home Rule Bill through its first stage. It was still called a Home Rule Bill, though differing widely from what most of them always understood by Home Rule. Deeply though he regretted the Bill's defects and limitations, still he thought almost any Parliament in Ireland was worth accepting—first, because it was in some sense a recogni-

tion of the right to govern themselves; and secondly, because even a crippled Parliament would give them fresh leverage for complete freedom. No one could be silly enough to suppose that an intelligent Ireland, having any sort of a Parliament of its own, would be prevented by any promise given now by place-hunters, from using that Parliament for true national purposes.

That no army which the Ulstermen can form will be able to stand against British troops supported by cavalry and artillery is evident; but it seems almost past belief that England should be ready to plunge the country into civil war; or that British troops should march out—with bands playing “Bloody England, we hate you still,” or some other inspiring Nationalist air—to shoot down Ulstermen who will come to meet them waving the Union Jack and shouting “God save the King.” And if they do—what then? Lord Wolseley, when Commander-in-Chief in Ireland in 1893, pointed out the probable effect on the British Army in a letter to the Duke of Cambridge:—

“If ever our troops are brought into collision  
“with the loyalists of Ulster, and blood is shed,  
“it will shake the whole foundations upon which  
“our army rests to such an extent that I feel that  
“our Army will never be the same again. Many  
“officers will resign to join Ulster, and there will  
“be such a host of retired officers in the Ulster  
“ranks that men who would stand by the Govern-  
“ment no matter what it did, will be worse than

“half-hearted in all they do. No army could  
“stand such a strain upon it.”

And then England, having crushed her natural allies in Ulster, will hand over the Government of Ireland to a party whose avowed object is to break up the Empire and form a separate Republic. Dangers and difficulties arose even when the independent legislature of Ireland was in the hands of men who were loyal and patriotic in the noblest sense of the term, and when there were in every district a certain number of educated gentlemen of position who (as we have seen) were always ready to risk their lives and fortunes for the defence of the realm; what will happen when the loyal minority have been shot down, driven out of the country, or forced into bitter hostility to the Government who have betrayed and deserted them? As Lecky wrote years ago:—

“It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the  
“danger that would arise if the vast moral legis-  
“lative, and even administrative powers which  
“every separate legislature must necessarily  
“possess, were exercised in any near and vital  
“part of the British Empire, by men who were  
“disloyal to its interests. To place the govern-  
“of a country by a voluntary and deliberate act  
“in the hands of dishonest and disloyal men, is  
“perhaps the greatest crime that a public man  
“can commit; a crime which, in proportion to the  
“strength and soundness of national morality,  
“must consign those who are guilty of it to undy-  
“ing infamy.”

If English people are so blind that they cannot perceive this, foreigners, whose vision is clearer, have warned them. Bismarck said that England, by granting Home Rule to Ireland, would dig its own grave; and Admiral Mahan has recently written :—

“It is impossible for a military man or a statesman to look at the map and not perceive that the ambition of the Irish separatists, if realised, would be even more threatening to the national life of Great Britain than the secession of the South was to the American Union.

“The legislative supremacy of the British Parliament against the assertion of which the American Colonists revolted and which to-day would be found intolerable in Canada and Australia cannot be yielded in the case of an island, where independent action might very well be attended with fatal consequences to its partner. The instrument for such action, in the shape of an independent Parliament, could not be safely trusted even to avowed friends.”

So then, having reviewed the evidence as calmly and dispassionately as I can, I answer the two questions which I propounded at the outset of the enquiry—That the real objects of the Nationalists are the total separation of Ireland from England and the establishment of an Independent Republic; and that the men of Ulster in resisting them to the uttermost are not merely justified on the ground of self-preservation, but are in reality fighting for the cause of the Empire.

## NOTE.

THE following Report of the Annual Pilgrimage in memory of Wolfe Tone, which took place on the 22nd of June last, and the article in the *Leinster Leader* (a prominent Nationalist journal) will show how closely the Nationalists of to-day follow in the footsteps of Wolfe Tone.

### THE MEMORY OF WOLFE TONE.

#### ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO BODENSTOWN.

*(From our Reporter.)*

On Sunday last the annual pilgrimage to the grave of Theobald Wolfe Tone took place to Bodenstown churchyard. This year the numbers who attended exceeded those of last year, about a thousand coming from Dublin and another contingent from Tullamore, Clare, and Athlone. The procession formed outside Sallins station was a most imposing one, being made up of St. James' Brass Band and the Lorcan O'Toole Pipers' Band and the Athlone Pipers' Band, the National Boy Scouts, the Daughters of Erin, and members of the Wolfe Tone Memorial Clubs.

At the graveside demonstration, Mr. Thos. J. Clarke presided and said it was a gratifying thing that numbers of their fellow-countrymen were to-day swinging back to the old fighting line and taking pride in the old Fenian principles. He introduced Mr. P. H. Pearse, B.A.

Mr. Pearse then came forward and delivered an eloquent and impressive oration, first speaking in Irish. Speaking in English, he said they had

come to the holiest place in Ireland, holier to them than that sacred spot where Patrick sleeps in Down. Patrick brought them life, but Wolfe Tone died for them. Though many had testified in death to the truth of Ireland's claim to Nationhood, Wolfe Tone was the greatest of all that had made that testimony; he was the greatest of Ireland's dead. They stood in the holiest place in Ireland, for what spot of the Nation's soil could be holier than the spot in which the greatest of her dead lay buried. He found it difficult to speak in that place, and he knew they all partook of his emotion. There were no strangers there for they were all in a sense own brothers to Tone (hear, hear). They shared his faith, his hope still unrealised and his great love. They had come there that day not merely to salute this noble dust and to pay their homage to the noble spirit of Tone, but to renew their adhesion to the faith of Tone and to express their full acceptance of the gospel of which Tone had given such a clear definition. That gospel had been taught before him by English-speaking men, uttered half-articulately by Shan O'Neill, expressed in some passionate metaphor by Geoffrey Keating, and hinted at by Swift in some bitter jibe, but it was stated definitely and emphatically by Wolfe Tone and it did not need to be ever again stated anew for any new generation. Tone was great in mind, but he was still greater in spirit. He had the clear vision of the prophet; he saw things as they were and saw things as they would be. They owed more to this dead man than they should be ever



able to repay him by making pilgrimages to his grave or building the stateliest monuments in the streets of his city. They owed it to him that there was such a thing as Irish Nationalism; to his memory and the memory of '98 they owed it that there was any manhood left in Ireland (hear, hear). The soul of Wolfe Tone was like a burning flame, a flame so pure, so ardent, so generous, that to come into communion with it was as a new optimism and regeneration. Let them try in some way to get into contact with the spirit of Tone and possess themselves of its ardour. If they could do that it would be a good thing for them and their country, because they would carry away with them a new life from that place of death and there would be a new resurrection of patriotic grace in their souls (hear, hear). Let them think of Tone; think of his boyhood and young manhood in Dublin and in Kildare; think of his adventurous spirit and plans, think of his glorious failure at the bar, and his healthy contempt for what he called a foolish wig and gown, think how the call of Ireland came to him; think how he obeyed that call; think how he put virility into the Catholic movement; think how this heretic toiled to make freemen of Catholic helots (applause). Think how he grew to love the real and historic Irish nation, and then there came to him that clear conception that there must be in Ireland not three nations but one; that Protestant and Dissenter must close in amity with Catholic, and Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter must unite to achieve freedom for all (applause). Let them

consider the sacrifices Tone had made; he had to leave so much. Never was there a man who was so richly endowed as he was, he had so much love in his warm heart. He (speaker) would rather have known Tone than any other man of whom he ever read or heard. He never read of any one man who had more in him of the heroic stuff than Tone had; how gaily and gallantly he had set about the doing of a mighty thing. He (speaker) had always loved the very name of Thomas Russell because Tone so loved him. To be Tone's friend! What a privilege! for Tone had for his friends an immense love, an immense charity. He had such love for his wife and children! But such was the destiny of the heroes of their nation; they had to stifle in their hearts all that love and that sweet music and to follow only the faint voice that called them to the battlefield or to the harder death at the foot of the gibbet. Tone heard that voice and obeyed it and from his grave to-day he was calling on them and they were there to answer his voice; and they pledged themselves to carry out his programme to abolish the connection with England, the never-failing source of political evils and to establish the independence of their country, to abolish the memory of past dissensions, and to replace for the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter, the common name of Irishman (applause). In that programme was to be found the whole philosophy of Irish Nationality; that programme included the philosophy of the Gaelic League and of later prophets, and it was to that

programme they pledged their adhesion; they pledged it now at the graveside of Tone; they pledged themselves to follow in the steps of Tone, never to rest by day or night until this be accomplished, until Ireland be free (applause); fighting on, not in despondency, but in great joy as Tone fought; prizing it above all privileges, and hoping for the victory in their own day. And if it should be granted to them in this generation to complete the work that Tone's generation left unaccomplished! But if that was not their destiny, they should fight on still, hoping still, self-sacrificing still, knowing as they must know that causes like this did not lose for ever, and that men like Tone did not die in vain (applause).

The address having concluded, wreaths were placed on the grave by the National Boy Scouts and the Inghanite Na h-Eireann.

During the afternoon an aeridheacht was held in an adjoining field at which music, songs and recitations were contributed, and a thoroughly enjoyable Irish-Ireland evening was spent.

## AT THE GRAVE OF WOLFE TONE.

THE lifework of Theobald Wolfe Tone, for the subversion of English Government in Ireland, and the supreme sacrifice he made in the mighty effort to erect in its stead an independent Ireland free from all foreign denomination and control, was fittingly commemorated on Sunday last, when the annual pilgrimage took place to Bodinstown Churchyard, where all that is mortal of the great patriot lie buried. The pilgrimage this year was worthy of the cause and the man, and afforded some object lessons in what might be accomplished by a cultivation of those principles of discipline and devotion to duty, in the pursuit of a glorious ideal, which Tone taught and adhered to throughout his adventurous and brilliant career. The well-ordered procession, the ready obedience to the commands of the marshals, the intense earnestness of the multitude, and the display made by the youths—the national boy scouts—their military bearing, and the bands and banners which interspersed the procession as it marched from Sallins to Bodinstown was a spectacle which pleased the eye and stirred the emotions. Everything in connection with the pilgrimage was carried out with a close attention to detail, and military-like precision which must have been very acceptable to the great patriot in whose honour it was organised, were he but permitted to gaze from the great Unknown upon this practical demonstration of the perpetuation of the spirit

which animated him and his time, in the struggle against English misrule, and the love and veneration in which he is still held, after the lapse of the century and more that has passed since he made the final sacrifice of his life in the cause of freedom. Tone done to death did not die in vain. The truth of this was evident in the character of the pilgrimage on Sunday last, when all that is best and purest in patriotism in the land assembled at his graveside, to renew fealty to the aims and ideals for which he suffered and died, and to hear the gospel of Irish nationality preached and expounded as he knew and inculcated it in his day. A fusion of forces, and the cultivation of a spirit and bond of brotherhood and friendship amongst Irishmen in the common cause, were his methods to attain the great ideal of a separate and distinct nationality, for then, as to-day, the chief obstacle to freedom and nationhood was not so much English domination in itself, as want of cohesion, faction, and the disruption caused by alien traditions and teachings. This was the prevailing spirit of Sunday's commemoration, and as the great mass of people filed past in orderly array and knelt, prayed, and laid wreaths on the lonely grave, the solemnity and impressiveness of the occasion was intensified. In the suppressed murmurs, and silent gaze on the tomb of the mighty dead, one could recognise the eagerness and the hope for another Tone to arise to complete the work which he promoted, and vindicate the purity of the motives which moved men like the leaders of '98 to do and dare for all, and to "substitute the

common name of Irishman for Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter." The promoters, too, were fortunate in their choice of orator for the occasion. Mr. P. H. Pearse did full justice to the occasion, and in language, beautiful and impressive, pictured the man and his movements and the lessons to be drawn by us to-day from the lifework of leaders in thought and action like Tone. Close and consistent adhesion to principles of patriotism and a readiness of self-sacrifice in the pursuit of those principles, were his distinguishing characteristics all through life, and if we in our time would emulate the example of Tone and his times, we must also be ready when the call came to meet any demand made upon us for the promotion of our national welfare. The orator of the day rightly, in our opinion, described that hallowed spot in Bodenstown as one of the holiest places in Ireland to-day, from the nationalist standpoint, holding as it does the ashes of the man who, without friends, money or influence to help him, and by sheer force of character, intensity of purpose and earnestness, prevailed upon the greatest emperor-general the world has ever seen Napoleon Bonaparte, to make a descent on Ireland, in order to aid our starved, tortured, and persecuted people to shake off the shackles that kept them in slavery, and elevate Ireland once more to the dignity of full, free, and untrammelled nationhood. We are all familiar with the events following this great effort of Tone's, and the dark chapters that closed a glorious career. All that is mortal of Tone is in the keeping of Kildare, and it is a trust that we feel

sure is not alone felt to be a high honour, but which cannot fail to keep the cultivation of a high standard of nationality before the people in whose midst repose the remains of one of Ireland's greatest sons. Ireland, from the centre to the sea, was represented in Sunday's great gathering to commemorate the achievements of Wolfe Tone, and the occasion was honoured first by the large and representative character of the throng, secondly by the decorum observed all through the day's proceedings, and thirdly, by the regularity and precision which attended the entire arrangements. There was just one other feature which must have been very gratifying to those identified with the organisation of the pilgrimage, namely: the large proportion of ladies and young people, coming long distances, who made up the gathering. And they were by no means the least enthusiastic of the throng. This enthusiasm amongst our young people is one of the most encouraging and promising signs of the times, serving as it does to demonstrate the undying spirit of Irish nationality, and the perpetuation of those principles to which Tone devoted his time, talents, and eventually made the supreme sacrifice of his life in having inculcated amongst his people. It is a glorious legacy, and one that has ever been cherished with veneration for the men who left it. He died a martyr to the cause he espoused, but his memory and the cause live. The living blaze he and his co-workers, in the cause of Irish freedom, kindled has never been completely stamped out, and it still smoulders, and has occasionally burst



into flame only to be temporarily extinguished in the blood and tears of our bravest and best who never forgot the teachings of Tone. And now, when the sky is bright once more, and every circumstance portends the dawn of a new era, full of hope and promise for the ultimate realisation of those ideals for which thousands of our race have sacrificed their lives, the spark of nationality which, even since Tone's death, has repeatedly leaped into flame, still glows fitfully to remind us that come what may it remains undying and unquenchable, a beacon to light us on the path to freedom should disappointment and dashed hopes again darken the outlook.

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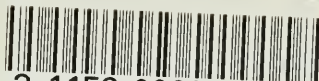
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